

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONORS COLLEGES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

A Thesis

by

BRENDA R. FREEMAN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Chair of Committee,	Joseph O. Jewell
Committee Members,	Patrick R. Goldsmith
	Vincente Lechuga
Head of Department,	Jane Sell

May 2015

Major Subject: Sociology

Copyright 2015 Brenda R. Freeman

ABSTRACT

Honors colleges have been an increasing development in higher education across the United States, and while investigations have been made into the place and functions of these programs, it is equally important to determine what the connection is between the larger university environment and the development of honors colleges. Reviewing archival data for a historical-comparative study of two regional, public universities in Texas, this paper seeks to illuminate the decisions which led to developing honors programs which later transitioned into honors colleges.

Investigations of Sam Houston State University and the University of Texas San Antonio's archival records found similar efforts by both universities to raise the prestige of the institutions through the creation of full-fledged honors programs. These programs were believed to increase the academic profile of the student body, boost faculty prestige, and increase research output. These programs transitioned to honors colleges in response to both universities' pushes towards research status, but this change was in name only and did not result in any curricular or functional changes to the programs in place.

While the economic function of the honors programs and colleges exhibit an inherent logic in the universities decisions, a content analysis of the documentation showed inequalities in the types of students enrolled in the honors programs and colleges. This indicates that while the meritocratic principles of both the parent and

honors institutions should allow deserving individuals entrance into an elite educational program, in practice it serves to exacerbate the gap that already exists in education between minority students and their white counterparts.

DEDICATION

Soli Deo Gloria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis results from a long process which started before I arrived at Texas A&M University – College Station. As such, I would like to thank Dr. Yvonne Villanueva-Russell at Texas A&M University – Commerce for launching me into the field of Sociology, encouraging my initial interest in the sociological processes behind honors colleges, and pointing me towards graduate school in the first place.

Similarly, thanks goes to Dr. Joseph O Jewell, Dr. Patrick R. Goldsmith, and Dr. Vincente Lechuga for their guidance, help, and patience in this project and with my sanity, and to Dr. John M. Eason for his empathy and exhortation.

Special mention should be made to Barbara Kievit-Mason and the student workers at the University Archives for Sam Houston State University as well as Julianna M. Barrera-Gomez and the staff of the University of Texas – San Antonio’s Institute of Texan Cultures Reading Room for all their help in the research process.

I am grateful to all my brothers and sisters in Christ who prayed for me during this process, and to all my friends who endured and relieved my anxieties.

To dad, thanks for listening.

To mom, thanks for loving.

To Josh, thanks for laughing.

Exodus 15:1-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Methodology	6
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Theory	11
Aid and Admission in Meritocracies	16
Role of Honors Colleges	21
CHAPTER III A TALE OF TWO UNIVERSITIES	26
Sam Houston State University and the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College	27
University Of Texas – San Antonio and the UTSA Honors College	45
Conclusion	57
CHAPTER IV UNIVERSITIES, HONORS COLLEGES, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS	60
Threads of Elitism	61
Conclusion	77
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	81
Limitations	85
Broader Impacts	86
REFERENCES	88

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Mean Achievement Scores for Entering Classes, 1990-1994.....	40
Table 2: University of Texas - San Antonio Admission Requirements	51
Table 3: Demographic Comparison of Sam Houston University and the Elliot T. Bower Honors College	67

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

City University of New York (CUNY) was established in 1961 by state legislature in order to combine several municipal colleges into one unit with the intention to provide doctoral programs to the people of New York City. Ten years later, amidst pressure by the critics over the competitive nature of college admissions, CUNY launched an open admissions policy. A review of CUNY's history, made readily available on their website, asserts that as a result "many thousands of students surged into CUNY schools." However, a 2005 *New York Times* article noted that "when the university introduced open admissions in 1970 and started focusing on the least accomplished students, many top students took flight" (Arenson 2005:B1). In an effort to revitalize both the school and its image, CUNY launched an honors college in 2001 with the goal of drawing these students who "took flight" by offering scholarships, academic stipends, free laptop computers, specialized courses, and smaller class sizes. The campaign seems to have worked, "attracting students who were previously taking a pass at coming to CUNY ... unquestionably, it has turned around the way people think about CUNY ...29 percent of Honors College applicants who were not accepted enrolled ...anyway" (Arenson 2005: B1).

CUNY is not unique in its use of an honors college to attract higher achieving students. Honors colleges are a relatively new phenomenon launched in the 1960s out of the honors program trend in higher education (Treat & Barnard 2012: 696-97). Shortly after the launch of Sputnik in 1957, honors education flourished in the United States,

leading to the development of honors colleges and the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS). “In 1965, ICSS disbanded, when its external funding expired,” but a year later the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) was created to “provide a strong national voice for excellence in higher education” (National Collegiate Honors Council 2013), marking the beginning of a significant focus on honors education at the collegiate level.

The development of honors education increased in 1983, when merit-based aid began to overturn needs-based aid. This was precipitated by a crises nationwide where “colleges and universities in all sectors were overextended in their annual operating budgets and long-term endowments,” in part brought on by academic and material expansions of universities to increase enrollment and compete with other universities (Thelin 2011: “A Proliferation of Problems” 4th paragraph). Added to this problem were recently raised questions about the deficiencies in American higher education, an overarching push for social justice within the university admissions process, and a turn towards academic consumerism as students sought institutions which would satisfy their needs. As a result, financial and educational accountability was sought not only among students and their families, but also at the state and federal level to ensure that the money which was being pumped into these institutions was being use for the educational mission purported by the universities. In this environment, turning to merit-based aid and a meritocratic admissions structure allowed “independent colleges ... to compete for the brightest students,” (Thelin 2011: “Budget Problems and Trade-offs”), and exhibit the university’s ability not only to draw high achieving students, but also enroll and

educate them properly for future employment, providing universities with greater incentive to institute honors programs and colleges. As a result, the rapid growth of honors colleges across the United States over the next twenty years drew the attention of the NCHC, who instituted a basic list of characteristics to regulate the structure of an honors college in 2005.

Throughout these historical changes, the stated purpose of honors colleges has centered on providing a more intensive collegiate experience for the student ahead of their peers. Some have related the development of honors programs to remedial courses, citing that “different students have different needs” (Pehlke 2003:28). Where remedial courses help some students reach expected levels of academic achievement, honors programs, and likewise colleges, are advertised as a method of challenging those students who are more advanced. At its core the creation of honors colleges harkens back to the ideology of meritocracy; a theory of distributive justice in which scarce resources are allocated based on criterion of personal achievement (Elster 1992; Liu 2011). Standardized tests and admissions essays are often used as base measures of candidacy in meritocracies creating a pool of applicants a university can select from in order to design the incoming class (Killgore 2009).

Debate surrounds these measures, pointing to issues with the accuracy of an assessment and the diversity of students who qualify. Many times those students who are able to achieve at a level deemed satisfactory are the same middle to upper class, white students who don’t need the resources in the first place (Pressler 2009:33; Liu 2011:389-

90). As such, issues such as elitism and a lack of diversity are often attributed to honors colleges, resembling similar arguments at the university admissions level.

The similarity between the arguments implies a connection between the larger university climate and that of an honors college, but the two climates have yet to be connected, leaving a key correlation unknown. Connected to this is an unstudied portion of the literature investigating the basic social environment of an honors college. Without knowing the environment of the university an honors college is created in or the extent to which it modifies or reflects that environment, it is difficult to target the conditions that might impact issues of elitism and diversity in an honors college. Further, implementing an honors college has become the standard practice for universities seeking to enhance their academic prestige and attract better students through meritocracies. Institutes of higher education are continually pressured to enroll and retain these “higher-achieving students” in order to gain a competitive edge against other universities. This has the potential to exacerbate any environmental issues as specialized groups of students are actively enrolled to ensure organizational goals are met (Killgore 2009), which results in an artificially constructed student population rather than being organically developed.

Introducing research into this area adds to current literature of honors colleges and illuminates the possibility that issues with elitism and diversity are inherent to the honors college because they are inherent to the larger university structure. Additionally, research into this area revitalizes investigation into the function of an honors college. As a response to the increase of honors colleges, the National Collegiate Honors Council

(NCHC) – a “professional association of Honors educators” formed in 1966 (NCHC 2013) – created a list in 2005 of “basic characteristics” an honors college should possess in order to prevent universities from using the term “honors college” without creating the requisite environment. The characteristics described by this list are largely organizational; the college is “an equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure,” headed by a dean with its own budget, recruitment, facilities, and a wealth of academically intensive “honors” courses available to its students (Sederberg 2005: 135-36). While these basic characteristics offer a structural perspective of an honors college, it neglects to indicate what sort of social environment should be fostered in the honors college. This is a flaw that has been remarked upon in by the readers and contributors to the NCHC’s journal, who believe that honors colleges should be a sort of pedagogical “laboratory” which raises the educational standards of the university as a whole rather than to a select group of students (Pehlke 2003: 32; Strong 2006).

This research is then guided by several questions originating from interests in the extent to which organizational forms in higher education reproduce extant hierarchal social structures and the purpose of an honors college within the larger university setting. Choosing two honors colleges at public universities within the state of Texas to provide a foundational comparison as both situations will be subject to the same state governance, similar university missions, and honors programs that developed into honors colleges during similar periods, the specific question being investigated is: “Why did honors programs and honors colleges developed at University of Texas – San Antonio and Sam Houston State University?” with a focus on the role of the State of

Texas in their development, the use of honors programs and colleges to reproduce existing hierarchies in education, and the transition from an honors program to an honors college.

Methodology

In order to research this properly, a comparative, historical content analysis of two different honors colleges in Texas will be conducted. Investigation into the literature has revealed several important historical periods in the development of honors colleges. The first is the 1960s, when honors colleges started to develop out of honors programs. Providing a frame for this first period, the National Collegiate Honors Council notes that its predecessor, the Inter-University Committee on the Superior Student (ICSS) was formed in 1957 due to a growth in honors education after the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik, and was later replaced by the National Collegiate Honors Council in 1965. As the next significant time period in honors education does not begin until the early 1980s, the NCHC era may extend until 1982 or be capped earlier if it becomes apparent that the trend of honors education is leveling off.

Merit based aid is first significantly noted in higher education in 1983, so this will begin the second historical period for investigation, which will last approximately until 2005. This length of period is significant not only for the rise in meritocracies, but also as the presence of honors programs start to increase throughout the United States. The reason for this period lasting for twenty years is to have a significant understanding of the development of an honors programs and colleges before the NCHC developed the

“basic characteristics of a fully developed honors college.” This list was developed in response to an increase in honors colleges, so the meritocratic period is in some ways a “lawless” period for honors colleges, where they were developed in accordance to what a university felt was most effective rather than conceding to particular guidelines. This period will emphasize any unique reasons that honors colleges were developed at a university since their form will be dictated by university needs. The length of this time period also allows for any correlation between the rise of meritocracies and the rise of honors colleges to become apparent.

The last period of time which will be studied is from 2005 until present. In 2003 the NCHC put together an “Ad Hoc Task Force on Honors Colleges and charged it with the task of developing a draft set of ‘The Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College’ for discussion at the 2004 National Conference in New Orleans” (Sederberg 2005:122). The purpose of this list was to prevent universities from falsely representing a program as an honors college. The list was approved by executive committee in 2005 and has been in effect since with only a few grammatical changes to note. By continuing on this study through the present, it provides a chance to look at the outcomes of developing such a list and how it has actually impacted the inner workings of an honors college, if at all.

While honors colleges began appearing in the United States during the 1960s and increased steadily during the 1980s, honors programs appear to have had a higher proliferation rate, and this is no different in Texas. For the purposes of this research, two public universities have been selected with honors programs that later developed into

honors colleges; University of Texas – San Antonio and Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. The University of Texas – San Antonio’s honors program began in 1986, becoming an honors college in 2002. Sam Houston State University started their honors program in 1990, and in 2009 it developed into the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College. While the honors colleges are no older than twelve years, they span a relevant period of time from before the NCHC’s list of basic characteristics and subsequent development afterwards. Likewise, the honors programs allow insight into earlier periods, SHSU and UTSA’s development during the 80s and 90s introduce honors development during the rise of meritocracies.

For each of these periods there will be a content and cultural analysis on relevant documentation in order to discover relevant terms and themes which represent honors colleges and their development inside the university system. Unless otherwise noted, specified documents were obtained from both the universities and the honors colleges. The types of documentation I looked at were: the admissions processes of both the university and honors colleges, the number and demographics of students applying, admitted, and enrolled, mission statements, policies, amendments, and modifications related to development, budget and resource allocation, official histories located on university and honors college websites or pamphlets, and any relevant publications (newspaper, magazine, or otherwise) about universities, honors colleges and their “unofficial” histories.

When reviewing these documents I looked for demographic trends pertaining to those students who applied versus those were admitted and enrolled in order to ascertain

potential issues with elitism and diversity. In university and honors college documents, as well as outside documentation obtained, I looked at the terms used to describe students (i.e “high-achieving,” “best and brightest,” “abler,” “gifted,” etc.), descriptors of honors education (“ivy league,” “strong curriculum,” “private school,” etc.) and the college/program itself (“unique,” benefits/beneficial,” “learning community,” etc.), descriptors of university education (“best,” “excellent,” etc.) and the university (“achieve success,” “support,” “family,” etc.). These terms provide not only a better understanding of how the university and the honors college are viewed, but also provide an example of how they view others by the way they are trying to differentiate themselves from other institutions and students.

The breadth of information I collected requires selecting specific universities to review. I endeavored to incorporate universities that have started an honors program or college in each of the three periods discussed (the 1960s, 1980s, and 2000s), and follow the information from the honors college inauguration until present. This would allow me to see how and if each of the selected time periods was relevant not only in creating honors colleges, but also as developmental stages an honors college may have progressed through. For the exploratory purposes of this paper, I focused on two honors colleges located in Texas selected from the NCHC’s list of member institutions. Ideally, each honors program or college would represent a relevant era (ICSS/NCHC, meritocratic, and the characteristic periods), but neither university had an honors program during the ICSS/NCHC period, so this honors period could not be discussed. The honors programs and universities will be tracked from their conception on to show

university development over time, how the decision to create an honors college became relevant to a particular institution, and how implementation of that decision progressed.

I focus specifically on the transition from honors programs to honors colleges, the key difference being the potential selectivity of inclusion in an honors college while honors programs are typically broader and more departmentally minded degree plans. Honors colleges will be loosely defined according to the NCHC's basic characteristics, i.e. as a separate "equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure," (National Collegiate Honors Council) noting any practical or structural changes throughout the time periods that deviate from current honors college policies, such as housing or scholarships.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As honors colleges are themselves relatively new to academia, the literature investigating them is likewise small and focused primarily on the organizational and functional aspects of an honors college, specifically in the community college setting where the mission of one seems to compete with the other. Useful to a study of honors colleges is the research on meritocracies, which is a far more advanced section of the literature reviewing premise, purpose, and the activity of merit-based aid and education, including relevant questions regarding elitism and a lack of diversity. Further, the theoretical bases of education offer a clarity to the topic, providing an abstract set of principles to compare and connect the honors college with its parent university.

Theory

Education in the United States has been identified as key to social mobility. While this is not a concept unique to the United States, the application of this idea is more pointed thanks to prevailing ideologies of individualism and equality and the myth of the American Dream. Ralph H. Turner explains this as the difference between sponsored and contest mobility (1960). Whereas the European, and in particular the English, education system employ “sponsored mobility;” where the established elite select students from a young age to be educated for future participation in the upper echelons of society, the focus on individuality and equality in the United States creates a contest environment for mobility. Using a “futuristic orientation, the norm of ambition,

and a general sense of fellowship with the elite” to drive participants forward in their education, contest mobility allows everyone starts at the same point and their personal successes or failures will determine whether they achieve elite status or not (Turner 1960, 859). As such, the American education system is set up to keep in the contest as long as possible, providing remedial courses and junior level colleges for “slower” students to keep their competitive edge until they reach the final stage in the contest: college admissions.

Yet while Turner espouses that the processes are different, the outcome of education remains the same; routing students through different types of education in order to maintain class differences through the reproduction of status and culture. Pierre Bourdieu explains this outcome as the result of symbolic violence and inequality in cultural capital. Education allows dominant groups to impose a particular system of meanings and symbols as a legitimate indicators of power and success in society (this imposition being the symbolic violence), developing a unique brand of cultural capital that, though arbitrary when compared to other cultures and symbols, becomes a mainstay in society as its legitimacy and its norms are reproduced and internalized through interactions within the family, the peer group, and the institution of education itself. This process of reproduction is the pedagogic work of symbolic violence, “a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a *habitus*” which allows the principles of a culture to remain relevant to an individual after the initial education, formal or not, has ceased (Bourdieu, quoted from Jenkins 1992: 106). As this cultural capital is determined and distilled by the dominant class, it becomes a

product unique to the dominant class and “misrecognized as legitimate by subordinate classes” whose own cultural capital is found to not measure up to the dominant group’s and is instead sanctioned (Jenkins 1992: 112).

This symbolic violence is justified in society through the espousal of meritocratic ideals in education, Turner’s contest mobility, where individuals are equally capable of achieving through their own merits and abilities and not due to their family background. As a result, Bourdieu argues that the dominated, disadvantaged classes participate in the reproduction of inequalities, not only through the legitimation the dominant group, but “because the most disadvantaged classes, too conscious of their destiny and too unconscious of the ways in which it is brought about, thereby help to bring it on themselves” (Bourdieu, quoted from Jenkins 1992: 112). This destiny is the legitimation not only of the dominant group, but of themselves as those who are dominated, who are never meant to achieve or even aspire to the same levels of success or power, which develop “negative dispositions and predispositions leading to self-elimination, such as, for example, self-deprecation, devalorization of the School and its sanctions, or resigned expectation of failure or exclusion may be understood as unconscious anticipation of the sanctions the School objectively has in store of the dominated classes” (Bourdieu, quoted from Jenkins 1992: 112).

Drawing on Durkheim’s dichotomy of the sacred and the profane for inspiration, Bourdieu thus considers education, and particularly elite schools to “always fulfill a function of consecration ... the process of transformation accomplished at ‘elite schools,’ through the magical operations of separation and aggregation ... tends to

produce a *consecrated* elite, that is, an elite that is not only distinct and separate, but also recognized by others and by itself as worthy of being so” (Bourdieu 1998: 102).

Bourdieu argues that education was designed for separation and aggregation of students based on “a place and a status ... a type of marking that creates a magical boundary between insiders and outsiders” (Bourdieu 1998: 102).

It is here that the transmission of class and culture occurs, not through the curriculum, but rather through the practices and conditions that facilitate the education, “dispossessing individuals of the value they believe themselves to have [and] making an individual’s value depend on the institution [dictating] an unconditional adherence to the institution that is thereby confirmed in its monopoly on the giving of value” (Bourdieu 1998:109). Whether this institution is a school or another social institution, individuals learn practices, habits, culture, and symbols at these institutes, an “alchemy of *consecration*, the symbolic constitution produced by social institution ... and endlessly reproduced in and through the exchange ... which it encourages and which presupposes and produces mutual knowledge and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986:22). The cultural capital that has developed within the dominant group becomes the key for success via education, and those individuals with the correct social capital which allows them to be inculcated by these values and statuses not only unlock this success, but subsequently seek to reproduce these same values and status symbols throughout the rest of their life in order to maintain the legitimacy of their class and culture (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu 1998; Collins 1971; Jenkins 1992).

The question that remains, then, is how are students chosen to receive a particular type of education, and even more specifically, how are they chosen at a university level? Karabel and Astin in their study of social class, academic ability, and college quality, note that “the ‘allocative function’ requires that different types of education experiences be made available. An undifferentiated system of higher education, unarticulated with the different occupational distinctions of its students, would be poor preparation for staffing positions in a stratified social structure” (1975: 382). Similarly, Turner describes the university atmosphere like “the true contest: standards are set competitively, students are forced to pass a series of trials each semester, and only a minority of the entrants achieve the prize of graduation” (1960: 863) echoing Bourdieu’s discussion of a “rite of institution,” implicating a theory of distributive justice as the artifice of separation and aggregation.

Operating from a economic and political position, John Elster introduces the topic of distributive justice by considering the schemas and criterion being used to determine fair allocation, which can vary based on the specific location where distributive properties can be used. In particular to higher education, Elster notes that access to higher education is largely based on selective admission unless a university is 1) “at or below capacity,” 2) “students are admitted beyond what capacity justifies, creating in effect substandard education,” or 3) “open admission is combined with selection at the end of the first year” (1992: 43). In the United States, distributive justice in higher education has the potential to take two different forms. From the perspective of the student, it is a matter of placement, where they have applied to several universities

based on what they know of the requirements, and will pick a university based on where they were accepted. For the university, distributive justice is a matter of selection as they create their own criteria – typically based on academic merit or institutional need (i.e. diversity) – and determine which students they will admit versus those they will not (Elster 1992:44-45).

Aid and Admission in Meritocracies

The notion of merit has become a leading factor in distributive justice in higher education. Previously, resource allocation in higher education focused on broad, class-minded efforts to ensure that the majority of the American populace would have access to higher education regardless of their financial position. As federal and state governments became increasingly involved in funding universities, the 1980s showed a shift away from this needs-based mentality and towards merit-based aid, a harkening to an older philosophy of meritocracy, which Amy Liu notes is “is a pejorative term used to describe a social system that developed based on intelligence testing and educational attainment” (2011:385), but one which many universities hoped would strengthen their place as an educational institution worth investing in (Thelin 2011).

This issue is not aided by pressure among institutes of higher education to enroll and retain these “higher-achieving students,” the “abler” students, the supposed best and the brightest. Universities find prestige through retention of “advanced” students, gaining a competitive edge not only in the raised student profile of their campus, but also in recruiting incoming classes. Becomes a circular process, where an increase in the

student profile of a campus allows recruitment of larger, more academically minded incoming classes, prestigious faculty, increased research, and premier graduating classes, which in turn raise the student profile again (Karabel & Astin 1975; Liu 2011; Longanecker 2002; Griffith 2011).

State governments support these ventures into meritocracies, believing that attracting bright students will recruit and maintain a better workforce in the state. The notion behind retaining bright students in their home state, and hopefully attracting noteworthy students from out-of-state, is that once educated and graduated, students will be more likely to find a job and remain rather than take their abilities elsewhere (Hamilton 2004; Longanecker 2002). The implication being that recruiting high-achieving students is supposed to create economic stability and prosperity for the state. This same potential is magnified by the federal government, who see education of the brightest students as a way of gaining “knowledge power,” though some see this as lazy and crass since “this goal is not substantially different from the social and economic benefit rationale associated with need-based aid; it is just a bit more targeted ... because it focuses on those most likely to succeed rather than on those most in need of support to succeed” (Longanecker 2002:34).

From a distributive justice perspective, this shift represents aid moving away from welfare and towards efficiency (Elster 1992: 84-98). Rather than distributing financial support to students based on who required the aid the most, universities began to ask who could put the money to best use in the long run, with the assumption being that students who had the academic accomplishments – namely the GPA and

standardized test scores – would have greater collegiate success, thus reflecting well of the university. It was these students who would then receive admittance and aid.

Proponents of merit-based aid and admission claim that meting out resources based on achievement provides not only distributive justice, but also equal opportunity and social mobility. Ideally, meritocracies provide everyone an opportunity for education regardless of their social status since the measure of admittance and aid is individual achievement. (Liu 2011:387-92).

While universities, states, and the federal government support the idea of merit-based aid and admission for its enhancements to the student and national population, some have argued that minorities and students from lower socioeconomic statuses are being neglected as a result. Focusing specifically on meritorious achievements may equalize students on the basis of personal character rather than economic advantages, but doing so at a college level creates a “too little, too late” outcome. Many times those students who are able to achieve at a level deemed satisfactory are the same middle to upper class, white students who don’t need the resources in the first place. “An eerie correlation exists between the class system and Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives,” where students from middle to upper classes are supplied the early education and opportunities necessary to excel in the areas of achievement prescribed by meritocratic justice (Pressler 2009:33; Liu 2011: 389-90; Bourdieu 1998; Karabel & Astin 1975). Studies of meritocracies support this “eerie correlation,” showing that

minority students are under-represented in the merit-aid pool, and white students are over-represented. One study estimates that greater than 60% of institutionally

offered merit aid went to students with family incomes above the median, and 13% when to students from families earning greater than \$125,000. (Griffith 2011:1022-23)

This evidence directly questions not only the equal opportunity of a meritocratic system, but also the social mobility and distributive justice of such a system, especially as “High status students ... are not only more likely to attend college but also more likely to attend a good college than are low-status students of equal ability” (Karabel & Astin 1975: 394). Karabel and Astin relate this to tracking systems found in American high schools, where lower class students attending community colleges “receive an education which is often both different from and shorter than what their counterparts in four-year colleges receive” before continuing on to professional or graduate schools before obtaining the best jobs after graduation (Karabel & Astin 1975: 395). Following a Bourdieu-ian perspective would suggest this outcome was the desired result of a meritocratic system in the first place, where the people already in power use the social and educational system to perpetuate their status (Bourdieu 1998; Geiser 2012).

These demographic trends in meritocratic education are contested “misinterpretations” of data, recipients, and timelines (Longanecker 2002: 32-33). It is suggested first that the data being reviewed only shows that *support* for merit over needs based awarding has increased, not that financial aid has actively shifted in this direction. Federal aid for merit awards has increased from 1995 to 2000 by 200%, totaling at \$3 million dollars, but needs based aid over this same period exceeds this amount even with only a 43% increase, amounting to \$24 million. So even if the meritocratic system is flawed, it is not taking away from those students in need, rather

“many needy students qualify for merit-based scholarships” (Longanecker 2002:33).

Beyond that is a question of the time period being observed, and the likelihood that it is not representative of the current academic climate, rendering arguments against meritocracies moot (Longanecker 2002).

Some have taken a more conservative stance on the issue of meritocracies, contending that perhaps the issue isn't the achievement based distribution, but how the achievements are determined. Admissions policies are a largely subjective diagnosis dependent on the university, the program, and the admissions officer (Killgore 2009). GPAs and standardized test scores provided an objective criteria, a more substantial benchmark to regulate resource allocation rather than personal assumptions made by university officials. But their usefulness has been brought in question, in part for the lack of diversity in applicants. But GPA, SAT, and ACT scores have been found by some to be poor indicators of a student's success in college as “many students have shown that they do not reach their full academic potential until after they enter college” (Pehlke 2003:30). As such it has become standard practice within honors colleges to use recommendations and individual interviews when assessing students. Some have even turned to “full-file reviews,” considering “high school records, standardized tests, essays, letters of recommendation, and contributions towards institutional diversity” (Singell and Tang 2012:719-20).

Role of Honors Colleges

As suggested by the opening vignette regarding City University of New York (CUNY), honors colleges are used to recruit top students to a university by advertising a unique, elite, and competitive education (Arenson 2005). The purpose of this can be extracted from the previous discussion about meritocracies and the circularity of a university's prestige. By recruiting top students through an honors college, the academic profile of a university increases, raising prestige of the university, which in turn draws in more students to the university. It's a phenomenon explicitly stated in Sam Houston State University's honors college student handbook, quoting "Recently retired SHSU President Jim Gaertner stated, 'Honors college status will enhance the university's ability to recruit high quality students and faculty and promote scholarship and research'" (SHSU 2013: 3).

Since "highly able and motivated students are rare, competition in recruiting is intense" (Scott & Frana 2008: 31), and an honors college can play a critical part in this process by drawing the interest of high achieving students to the university by way of the honors college. A "coattail effect" occurs, where a portion of students who applied to the honors college but were not accepted still choose to enroll in the university effectively increasing the student profile and likewise the university's prestige, motivating universities to develop honors colleges (Arenson 2005: B1; Scott & Frana 2008; Singell & Tang 2012: 731-34). Notable to this effect is that while the applicants who choose to enroll have a higher academic ranking than the average student, the university "tend[s] to lose its best honors applicants to the other private and public schools that are

otherwise preferred” (Singell & Tang 2012: 734). Several alternate theories for the development of honors colleges have been proposed, such as seeking legitimacy as an institute of higher education, or encouraging innovation, and, particular to community colleges, extending the upward mobility of low socioeconomic status but high academically achieving students (Cohen 1970; Treat & Barnard 2012: 697).

Independent of the individual institutional motivations, the potential functional benefits of an honors college has led to an increase in these types of programs nationwide (Cohen 1970; Sederberg 2005; Treat & Barnard 2012). The National Collegiate Honors Council became concerned about the likelihood that universities were only making cosmetic changes to honors programs and thus “‘honors college’ becomes a devalued misnomer designed as a marketing strategy [and] a disservice to those exceptional honors programs that resist playing the name change game” (Sederberg 2005:121). To remedy this issue, the NCHC launched an ad hoc task force to review member honors colleges and develop a “basic list of characteristics of a fully developed honors college” (Sederberg 2005; NCHC 2013) Largely organizational and referencing a previous list about the characteristics of an honors program, both the task force report and the list itself investigate the requisite structure of an honors college; the college is “an equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure,” headed by a dean with its own budget, recruitment, admissions, facilities, offering academically intensive “honors” courses relevant to a student’s degree program, academic distinction at graduation, and engaging in alumni affairs and development (Sederberg 2005: 135-36). While giving a baseline for the functional aspects of the honors college, one of the

critiques often made is a lack of insight on the social aspect of the honors college, a question discussed in the NCHC journals as well as outside monographs.

Joseph Cohen, an honors director and the founder of the Interuniversity Committee on Superior students, commented in 1970 that an honors college should be a place of innovation, but later articles among the NCHC and honors educators indicate that this is not typically the case. Contributors to the NCHC journals still argue that the honors college should be a pedagogical “laboratory” used to reinvigorate and reinvent higher education in ways that can be later emulated by the university as a whole rather than for a select group of students (Pehlke 2003: 32; Strong 2006). While this might seem to indicate more of a structural critique about the use of an honors college in the larger university environment, it holds a conceptual connection with the debate about elitist notions inculcating honors colleges as the rising dichotomy is between inclusive innovation and exceptional education.

Even when there are indications for change, seeing “honors colleges moving away from being defined by specific problems or disciplinary approaches and heading instead toward missions that convey flexible problem-solving skills” (Scott & Frana 2008: 29) the exclusivity of the program remains, “where *selected* students and faculty members practice scholarship and citizenship together, [building a] learning community [with] citizen-scholars ... embracing the public square as a locus of action” (Scott & Frana 2008: 29-30, emphasis added). The honors college becomes a place for innovation, but only for the chosen elite.

As discussed previously, universities are already highly stratified social environments both within and across institutions, and the introduction of another delineation between students exacerbates these issues. Honors colleges are seen by many as stratified, socially unjust and “counter-intuitive” due to the “individualized attention on students who [are] naturally inclined to succeed,” the wealth of goods awarded to these students, and the segregation of the honors colleges from the rest of the university (Pehlke 2003:31). As a result of the specialized attention on a select few students, honors colleges are charged as being elitist (Freeman 2012; Liu 2011; Pehlke 2003; Rinn & Cobane 2009). While scholars nitpick over the semantics of terms like “entitlement” and “deserving,” the result of this context relates back to the fact that meritocracies, and subsequently honors colleges, “create and legitimize difference for the purpose of selecting students ... at [their] core [becoming] a reward schedule with larger social ramifications,” such as the impression of superiority due to personal merit (Liu 2011:385-86, 388), which becomes especially problematic with their introduction to a community college environment whose core is to provide education for the masses (Floyd & Holloway 2006: 50; Outcalt 1999: 60-61; Thelin 2011: 299-301; Treat & Barnard 2012).

This sparks a debate in the literature as proponents of honors colleges focus on the idea of social mobility as justifying elitism. Norm Weiner, director emeritus of the honors program at State University of New York, College of Oswego, argues that the very term elitist is not negative in its roots, but rather indicates “‘the choice part or flower (of society, or of any body or class or persons)’ – in other words, the best”

(Weiner 2009: 21). As the goal of social mobility in the United States is to reach a “middle-class society” where everyone is equal, likewise the goal of an honors education is to take the best (i.e. elite) students and help them climb the social ladder to middle-class status (Weiner 2009).

Weiner’s ideas become the basis of other NCHC contributor’s defense of elitism, honors colleges provide “gifted” students an equal education that is not necessarily guaranteed under the law even though “students at the lower end of the normal distribution are protected by federal laws” (Rinn and Cobane 2009:54). Honors colleges and their students are thus likened to a championship athletic team or cardiovascular surgeons, where rather than seeking out mediocre specialists, we prefer the best professionals, and by focusing educational resources on the best students, we ensure that the best will lead our future endeavors (Spurrier 2009:51).

CHAPTER III

A TALE OF TWO UNIVERSITIES

Arguably, to research the historical development of honors colleges, from conception to inception and through its evolutionary stages, is a large project requiring an almost insurmountable pile of data and obscene amount of time for a single researcher in an area largely unexplored. This would seem especially true as the historical development of honors programs would have to be further elucidated to account for its foundational input into the lives of many honors colleges, and further than this would be the cultural backdrop which the parent university provides. As such, narrowing to a comparative study of two honors colleges at two distinct universities provides a more manageable set of data to review.

The choice to research Sam Houston State University (SHSU) and the University of Texas – San Antonio (UTSA) and their honors colleges spanned from a series of restrictions. The first was to focus on public universities to prevent any possible conflicts in university missions or orientations, the most ready example, as mentioned early, being that community colleges have a greater focus on equal access to education than public or private universities. Public universities provide a middle ground between the two extremes, offering access to a larger group of seeking students than a private university while typically providing a fuller, more prestigious education than found among community colleges. Once this was determined, selection was further restricted to those universities found within the same state, as they would be subject to the same state-level

bureaucracies and governmental policies. Texas was an arbitrary decision for ease of access for the researcher.

Honors colleges were themselves defined by the National Collegiate Honors Council's definition, with the primary focus being that they were separate colleges within the university rather than a "centralized 'overlay' structure of university undergraduate programs" (Sederberg 2005: 124). University and honors college websites were reviewed for this main characteristic and if it either was unclear how the honors college was structured or evident that the honors college was not a separate unit, those institutions were removed from the list. Websites were also reviewed to determine the age of the honors college (and in both cases the honors program they developed out of). In an effort to span as much time as possible, honors colleges with a longer history were preferred. Lastly, universities from different systems were selected to provide diversity both in the university missions and in the missions and policies of the systems. In the event of a few ties, those universities that proved closer via driving distance from the researcher's home base won the proverbial coin toss, leading to the decision to investigate the Sam Houston State's Elliot T. Bowers Honors College and the University of Texas – San Antonio Honors College.

Sam Houston State University and the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College

Founded in 1879, Sam Houston State holds precedence as the oldest teaching college in the southwest, a history that, as with many universities, includes a bevy of name changes, campus expansions, and academic restructuring. The space the university

now occupies originally housed Austin College, a Presbyterian liberal arts college whose charter – “Modeled after those of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton” – was signed by then Governor of Texas, George Wood, in November of 1849 (Austin College). After 27 years which included the Civil War, outbreaks of small pox and yellow fever, and the resultant flight of the wealthy from the area exacerbating the financial strain the city was already succumbing to, Austin College moved to Sherman, Texas in 1876, “a more promising area” (Austin College) than Huntsville (Cashion 2004).

Meanwhile, the state of Texas was dealing with its own difficulties regarding the Civil War and Reconstruction, and with a change in political parties, education began to feature more prominently in the legislative agenda. “A renewed interest in improving quality of education at public schools throughout Texas, and, consequently, the training of it’s teachers,” led Governor Oran Roberts to propose the development of a teacher’s training school in the Sixteenth Legislature (Cashion 2004: xviii). It was a proposal readily accepted by the House and the Senate, taking “scarcely two weeks to introduce the necessary bills” (Cashion 2004: xviii), and after a series of failed educational endeavors in Austin Hall, the sole remnant of Austin College in Huntsville, the town leapt at the opportunity. Securing allies in the Senate and the House, the bill “*to Establish a State Normal School to be Known as the Sam Houston Institute and Located at Huntsville, Texas*” (Cashion 2004: xix) was pushed through the legislature and passed by three votes. Sam Houston Normal Institute was signed into existence by the Governor on April 21, 1879 – San Jacinto Day (Cashion 2004).

Following a tumultuous beginning, in which the university's first president died just eleven days into the opening semester and the school itself "wobbled during its first two years like a poorly released top trying to achieve a center of gravity" (Cashion 2004: 4) due to the excessive amount of oversight by the State and the interest of the Peabody Education Foundation, the institution eventually found itself and thrived. Over the succeeding years the campus expanded materially – adding dormitories, classrooms and libraries to the campus – and academically, transitioning from two-year degree to a four-year baccalaureate and offering graduate degrees during Harry F. Estill's term as the University President (1908-1937). The Normal Institute became a University in 1969, the criminal justice program for which the university would later become famous for having developed only six years prior (Sam Houston State University, "SHSU: A Brief History," Sam Houston State University, Department of Criminal Justice, "History").

The honors program, which would launch the honors college in succeeding years, opened in the fall of 1990, during Martin J. Anisman's tenure as president, a time noted as having an "academic emphasis" (Sam Houston State University, "SHSU: A Brief History," Cashion 2004), but documentation for the program shows the development began five years prior, under the presidency for which the honors college would later be named. Elliot T. Bowers became president of SHSU in 1970, "a time when higher education was abuzz with expressions of self-doubt and predictions of a dire future" (Cashion 2004: 134). The United States was in its own upheaval due to the Vietnam War abroad and the Civil Rights movement at home and as to be expected, these national issues impacted local institutions, but SHSU was largely untouched beyond an initially

“clumsy” but ultimately quiet move to integrate in 1964 (Cashion 2004: 119). While the previous president had marked his time at the university by expanding academic programs and heralding in the criminal justice program in the midst of a seemingly tranquil university despite the national unrest, President Bowers enacted an open door policy to ensure that what discontent may be brewing on campus would be addressed (Cashion 2004).

A Suitcase College. The university population itself was changing due to a variety of outside forces beyond desegregation. Where the “community college boom ... the University of Houston going public [and] Texas A&M’s decision to begin enrolling women” (Cashion 2004: 134), combined with the recently installed highway 45, incentivized commuting to school, leading SHSU to become known as a “suitcase college.” Worries over low enrollment and the commuting student body made its way into the Faculty Senate, where a special task force was “working on an overall plan for recruitment, public relations, and student retention ... Senators generally approved the proposals, but feared that there might not be enough emphasis on ‘energetic and aggressive visits’ to high schools and junior colleges” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 01/26/1984). University housing was reviewed in November of 1985, noting issues of bugs, lack of action on the part of maintenance requests, and inoperative washers and dryers. Of all the dorms

Adams wins hands down [of being the worst dorm] just on general appearance. Outside paint peeling, general area filthy. Dumpster located in front of entrance stairway smells horribly and various pieces of poorly thrown garbage are in abundance. A definite candidate for an urban ghetto. [In conclusion] The dormitories, at least in the opinion of this committee, are not the horror stories as are rumored. There are, however, many areas that need considerable

improvement ... One last conclusion that was drawn come from comments from several students. In effect, they said, “Thanks for caring about us.” Possibly other “visitors” should stroll down the halls and show concern and, more importantly, take action. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/14/1985).

In view of the Faculty Senate’s own conclusions, it is hardly any wonder that students would choose to drive home rather than remain on campus in the dorms. As the *Alcalde* – the annual yearbook for SHSU – notes, going home “meant free washer and dryer use ... and a few home cooked meals” (Cashion 2004: 142), not to mention authorities who cared about the student’s living conditions. Commuter students continued to be a topic of discussion, broaching again in the September 1989 faculty minutes under the guise of student apathy, with the majority of the faculty senate agreeing with University President Martin J. Anisman that there needs to be an increase in student involvement on campus, not only for the student’s own enjoyment, but that “if students have a meaningful four years while they are on campus, they will join the Alumni Association” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/21/89). Though this is noted in the minutes as important for their participation, the subsequent financial endowments cannot be far from the president or senators’ minds.

Remediation is Education. Concurrently discussed in this period were issues with the academic standards of the university. Faculty Senate minutes reflect a long conversation over academic standards, discussing the use of standardized testing, such as the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP), to ensure requirements were met and whether this would wrongly limit the subject matter professor’s could teach. Some tried to mitigate these concerns by suggesting changing the policies allowing F’s to be removed from a GPA if a student retakes the course or students to enroll late in courses

(SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/29/84). Similar concerns were raised four years later, a senator asking whether it was beneficial to the university to casually reenroll students who had been on probation or suspension – “the details [of their suspension] too strong to report in minutes sent to those with weak stomachs” – and suggesting that the TASP may “rectify the situation” by preventing some of these students from reenrolling (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 02/16/89). This same senator, Dr. Eglsaer,

asked about the number of students who need remediation in correlation to the proposed cap on enrollment at SHSU. Is the university for all? Are we in the business of remediation? Dr. Anisman’s [the newly tenured University President] reply was that the question was a complex issue [but] remediation is a fact of life. He talked about Yale University who teaches their freshmen remedial writing, a fact which is not very well known. Another word for remediation is education. ... A contradiction exists between what many of us were trained to do and what we need to do in order to educate ...

Eglsaer stated that he was worried about SHSU’s lack of funds for remediation. Anisman continued by agreeing that education has always been underfunded ... However, money is not the only solution (SAT scores did not go up when we had more funds than we currently have). When and if we accept students, we own them the chance to graduate four years later. If we cannot give them that chance, then we should not accept them. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/21/1989)

Dr. Eglsaer does not appear to be alone in his estimation of the academic state of the university; when asked in a 1990 faculty survey to “evaluate SHSU’s commitment to basic academic skills in the education of each student,” 42% of respondents found SHSU less than acceptable and 45% estimated it to be “adequate.” Likewise, when asked to “evaluate SHSU’s admissions standards regarding quality control,” 57% marked either “less than adequate” or “much less than adequate,” 28% finding these standards to be adequate. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes Memo, 05/07/90) It’s a telling statement when less than 10% of the faculty find the university to hold strong academic standards

and be committed to teaching basic academic skills. It's even more telling when the median response available on the survey is "adequate." The university is doing *enough*. It's *passable*.

Overlaying all of these concerns was the persistent belief that a raise in academic standards was necessary for the university, with some pointing to other universities who had similarly raised standards and saw an increase in their enrollment and retention (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/29/84, 10/06/88, 02/16/89). This is interesting argument for its similarity to early quotes about honors colleges, such as City University of New York's discussion of their honors college "attracting students who were previously taking a pass at coming to CUNY ... unquestionably, it has turned around the way people think about CUNY ... 29 percent of Honors College applicants who were not accepted enrolled ... anyway" (Arenson 2005: B1), or even SHSU's honors college student handbook on how "Honors college status will enhance the university's ability to recruit high quality students and faculty and promote scholarship and research" (2013: 3).

The SHSU Faculty is Comparable. Linked to the question of academic standards is that of faculty quality. The administration may choose to change academic standards, but it is up to the faculty to implement them, and while some in the faculty senate find "pride in the SHSU faculty in general and argued that quite often the SHSU faculty manifests and poor self-image that is unwarranted. In fact ... the SHSU faculty is comparable to any other faculty," others ventured to point out that

we often also seem to downgrade the abilities of our students at SHSU and that these students most often seek out the good teachers in the course of their

studies ... there often seems to be a double standard in operation when the faculty discusses academic matters. The faculty often criticizes the administration in the performance of its duties, but becomes somewhat irate when the administration voices complaints about faculty practices and activities. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/29/1984)

Yet at the end of this particular meeting, while there was much concern over academic standards, and the faculty senate was willing to start a “campus-wide dialogue,” there was little support for policies that had the possibility of interfering with a professor’s classroom management or teaching practices. A hardly surprising conclusion as faculty senate members are themselves faculty and therefore may be hampering their own work, though the senate was quick to point out that “incompetence, laziness, or a lack of professionalism [among the instructors] are not to be tolerated,” simply that “the maintenance of high standards and the creation of pride in SHSU can and must be created from within and depends greatly on the efforts of the individual instructors” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/29/1984).

September of 1988 showed discussion of efforts to improve faculty evaluations, but other than the occasional repetition of these complaints, the majority of the focus on faculty quality moved in the direction of providing faculty more opportunity and funding for research, as well as ensuring that merit increases in pay are fairly distributed (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 03/01/1984, 09/08/1988, 09/21/1989, 01/18/1990).

A Viable Honors Program. While issues with general academic standards and faculty quality were being discussed, several programs were put in place to begin developing enrolled students academic abilities, such as the Across-the University Writing Program, implemented in the fall semester of 1989, which focused on creating

“writing enhanced” courses, providing seminars for students on how to improve their writing, and for faculty on how to implement, teach, and evaluate student writing (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/05/1989). It is within this environment – of commuting students, questionable academic standards, and prideful faculty – that the honors program is likewise developed.

Discussions of the honors program first appear in the 1984, revolving around improving the current program, an overlay system where students could graduate with honors after passing two three-credit research courses and completing an honors thesis under the supervision of a faculty advisor, set in place due to its “low visibility” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/1/1984). A forefather to many honors programs and colleges that become distinct entities within the university, this earlier system was embedded into the colleges themselves, where a student could enroll if they had junior standing and a 3.5 GPA both in their major and overall, rather than the later evolution in which students applied to a separate system for their freshman year (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/1/1984; SHSU Undergraduate Catalogue, 1990-1992: 17-18). It would later undergo a name change – department academic distinction program allowing students to graduate with *distinction* – to allow its preservation when “honors program” came to mean a distinct subset of the student body beholden to a separate standard of curricula and requiring a director to manage everything there in (SHSU, Undergraduate Catalogue, 1992-1994: 20, 36-37; SHSU Faculty Senate Minutes: 04/19/1990).

Interestingly, when the *Honors Program* first appears in the undergraduate catalogue, continuing students who wished to enter at that time must have a cumulative

GPA of 3.4 or better, making those pursuing a departmental distinction eligible, but students who were accepted to the honors program as a freshman were required to maintain a 3.25 in order to continue participation (SHSU, Undergraduate Catalogue, 1992-1994). It isn't until the 2000-2002 undergraduate catalogue that the requirements for the academic distinction change, dropping the overall required GPA to 3.25, but a 3.5 continued to be required in the major GPA, a requirement not even mentioned for the honors program (pp. 30-31, 44-45). These GPA standards have not changed, the 2012-2014 undergraduate catalog online showing the same requirements for both the academic distinctions and the honors college. Indeed, the only requirements that seem to adjust for the honors college, *nee* program, are an increase in the SAT/ACT and class rank benchmarks for admission.

While 1984 shows some cursory discussion in the faculty senate minutes about the future department academic distinction program, the honors program itself does not appear until 1987, where short sentences mention that “a viable honors program was discussed” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/01/1987) and that the Senate’s Academic Affairs Committee would be meeting with a Dr. Parotti, who had proposed an honors program in 1985 (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/15/1987). While neither Dr. Parotti’s proposal or what exactly is meant by a “viable honors program” (what about the present honors program was so impractical that a new one was necessary?) can be extracted from the minutes themselves, resolutions submitted to the Faculty Senate in 1988 explain the rationale:

Sam Houston’s current Division/Department Honors Program is limited essentially to a six-semester credit hour special course in a student’s major field.

This compares unfavorably with full-fledged Honors Programs in operation at many of our sister institutions such as TAMU, Southwest Texas, UT Arlington, etc ... A fully developed Honors Program at Sam Houston would (1) enhance recruitment of academically talented students, (2) brighten the University's academic image, and (3) boost faculty morale. These benefits would accrue with very limited costs ... the amount of scholarship money directed to support such a program need not be excessive. (For the sake of comparison one might note that this spring the University advertised fourteen \$400 scholarships for successful cheerleader applicants.) (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 04/14/1988)

Aided by the temporal connection to an academic master plan (another piece of documentation unavailable, but likely connected to the earlier discussed issues of student retention, academic standards, and faculty quality) would suggest that Sam Houston State University needed an academic revival and an *Honors Program* could help.

In December, the Academic Affairs Committee was seeking input from faculty and students on the honors program with the hopes of having a proposal ready around March of 1988. Only a month delayed, on April 14th,

The Academic Affairs Committee presented its study of the possibility of having a fully developed Honors Program at Sam Houston ... After a brief discussion, the Senate unanimously approved the committee's motion as Senate Bill #16 (1987-1988):

That Sam Houston State University have a full-fledged Honors Program designed and ready in time to be included in the next catalogue. In order to implement such a program, it is suggested that a committee be appointed which would have broad representation from the divisions/departments mostly likely to be affected. Additionally, consideration should be given to including student representation from an honor society such as Alpha Chi. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 04/14/1988)

The Honors and Advanced Placement Committee was directed to take over the implementation of the honors program, "a brief discussion followed about how some other schools in the state have special programs for incoming honors students" (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/08/1988), and it was just a matter of time, funding, and

housing for the program to come into fruition (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/08/1988, 04/06/1989, 01/18/1990). The Honors Program Committee split off from the Honors and Advanced Placement Committee in April of 1989 to divide the workload, and the Chair and future Honors Program Direction, Gary Bell believed the honors program would be operational for the Fall of 1990, again reiterating the “recruitment of exceptional students ... and general improvement of the academic environment” as well as providing the “opportunity of an aging faculty to try new ideas” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 04/06/1989).

The honors program was indeed operational for the fall of 1990, and while the faculty senate minutes mention no connection between the two events, it is interesting to note that as of September 13th, “the latest enrollment count was 12,783. This represents a 3.5 percent increase over last fall’s record enrollment. More importantly, the total number of credit hours (the figure used in calculating money allocations) has risen almost 6.5 percent over last year’s registration” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/13/1990). It would seem that the earlier correlations between enrollment and an honors program could be argued as true at SHSU as well, though this is a difficult connection to make as following years show a continued increase in enrollment, and as one senator commented in 1984, it is possible that the university was simply in a growth cycle (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 11/29/1984).

While the rest of the university continued to be mired in questions of merit pay for faculty, faculty research, recruitment and enrollment rates, academic restructuring, academic standards and curriculum, and being the “best regional university” (SHSU,

Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/25/1990 11/08/1990, 02/07/1991, 08/24/1991, 04/02/1992), the honors program set off with a bang. From the onset, the honors program was designed to be more rigorous than the majority of courses available to students, an article in the *Huntsville Item* outlining an Integrated Science course offered to honors students:

The curriculum begins with astronomy and discussion of the Big Bang theory. By the second month of class, emphasis has switched to geology and the formation of the universe. Before Thanksgiving Break, study of primitive amino acids switches the study to chemistry, and in the last weeks before final exams for the semester biology is covered with readings on evolution of the first life forms ... Although SHSU has offered enriched academic programs in departments of its majors for several years, Honors Program coordinator Gary Bell said Integrated Science and a sophomore-level course on man's values and decision making represent the first courses set aside specifically for highly-motivated, superior students. (Anderson 1990: 1)

The article continues on to mention the history of the honors program and Dr. Bell's hope that the honors classes will inspire similar courses for the general student body, but most notably it gives insight into the difference between the honors students and the rest of the undergraduate populace. Bell states that the previous fall, the average SAT score for entering students was 823 compared to the inaugural honors cohort average of 1018. The honors students also received separate housing with a direct connection to campus internet, a computer room, reading room, television room, personal computers for each student, a special study room in the library, and extracurricular activities such as taking cultural trips to Houston. But none of this is meant to segregate the honors students; "We wanted to give a sense of community to the program ... Many times these students arrive at SHSU and feel like outsiders because their classmates may not be as motivated as they are. This way, they can be in contact with others with the same motivation" (Anderson 1990: 3).

Table 1: Mean Achievement Scores for Entering Classes, 1990-1994.

Achievement Measure	Entering Class					Grand Mean
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	
High School GPA (based on 4.0 scale)	3.53	3.54	3.62	3.59	3.63	3.59
High School Rank	11.1	12.4	11.3	9.2	9.4	
SAT - Total (Honors Program)	1127	1146	1128	1138	1118	1130
National Sample	900	896	899	902	902	
State Sample	874	874	876	850	886	
SHSU Sample	820	831	802	851	849	
SAT - Verbal	548	545	551	568	527	547
SAT - Quantitative	578	601	577	570	590	583
ACT (Honors Program)	26.4	26.7	26.8	27.1	26.7	26.7
National Sample	20.6	20.6	21.1	20.7	20.8	
State Sample	19.8	19.9	21.3	20.0	20.2	
SHSU Sample	19.1	19.2	19.7	20.0	19.7	

Copied from SHSU, 1995 "Honors Program Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1994," 3.

Neither the faculty minutes nor the brochures distributed by the honors program show any deviation from this path over the course of Dr. Bell's tenure as Honors Program Direction, but rather an increasing push to acquire the best, of both the students and the university. Renamed the "Elliot T. Bowers Honors Program," "in dedication to the President of the University that first started the gears turning" (SHSU, Honors College Student Handbook 2013/14: 3), the program continued to attract "high achieving students," an institutional effectiveness plan covering its first five years showing that average SAT scores of both freshmen and transfer students in the honors college exceeding both SHSU and the national averages, the latter by 200 points and the former by 300 (see table 1). Likewise, the average GPA for the entering class each year was

around 3.59, though the mean scores show an increase almost every year both in GPA and high school ranking (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 3). The earlier belief that an honors program would raise the quality of students entering the university would be, as the institutional effectiveness plan summarizes, “reasonable to assume” (4; SHSU Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/15/1992).

The honors program was quick to ensure students would continue to out perform, the initial requirements of 1050 on the SAT or a 25 on the ACT as well as being among the top 15% narrowing to an SAT of 1100 or an ACT of 26, and the top 10% by the next undergraduate catalogue, until it finally settled for a student being in the top 10% of their graduating class with an SAT of 1200 or ACT of 27 – briefly rising the ACT to 28 from 1998-2000, but returning to the previous requirements the subsequent catalogue (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 3).

A document which appears to be a preliminary student handbook or pamphlet for the honors college notes that beyond the previously mentioned benefits (housing, curriculum and extracurricular activities) honors students also receive “access to scholarship information [possible financial support] [sic] ... smaller than average classes [and] registration before the rest of the studentbody [sic]” (SHSU, Honors Program “SHSU Honors Program” 1990:1). Indeed, Dr. Bell sent a letter of thanks to President Anisman March 15th, 1990, “for your willingness to direct the Augusta Lawrence Scholarships to the Honors Program two years from this date.” Data from the institutional effectiveness plan shows honors students receiving 22% of available university-wide scholarships, a percentage which steadily increases, with honors

students receiving 33% in the 94-95 period, as well the disbursements originally a part of the program. Cash value of the total scholarship students received are \$19,900 in the 91-92 period, and jump to \$35,3125 in the next, leveling off the subsequent two years around \$44,000 (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 34-36). While similar data for today is not available, the honors student handbook for the 2013/14 period informs students of six scholarship opportunities and directs them to a website for additional university-wide scholarships.

The average class size for the fall of 1990 was 33.9 students, ranging between 28.4 in the College of Education to 49.3 in the College of Criminal Justice. Of these, 33 classes in six different programs had enrollment of 100 or more students and 214 classes in 25 programs were the next bracket down, having enrollment between 50 and 100 students. This was a source of debate for the faculty senate, “questioning whether a university, which views itself as one that has a ‘faculty that knows students as individuals,’ should be concerned with rising class sizes” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 02/07/1991), Senator Eglsaer having brought up the same issue the previous year as class sizes were starting to reflect larger, arguably more impersonal universities such as Texas A&M and the University of Texas (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 01/18/1990). The honors program, in the mean time, capped class enrollment at 25 students, “which encourages the development of more instructor/students interaction” (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 1), data for 1992 showing the two honors courses with an enrollment of 22 students (SHSU, Presidents Report, Fall 1992: 63). While data was unavailable for honors sections of university-

required courses (of which students needed to take 24 credit hours in order to graduate), it would seem safe to assume a similar enrollment rate for these, particularly as the honors college enrolled between 30 and 50 students a year (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 29).

As for early registration of honors students, this was agreed to at the inception of the honors program, the October 16th, 1989 meeting of the Academic Policy Council hearing

the following recommendation: the Honors Students have permission to register one week before anyone else on campus. Reasons for this request include: (1) being able to determine ahead of time enrollment in the honors courses, (b) inability of those in the Honors Program to cope with closed classes, and (c) serving as an additional incentive for participation in the program. Mr. Bass moved that the recommendation from the Honors Committee be accepted. Seconded by Dean Gilmore. Passed unanimously.

Participation in the honors program was not without its benefits. After it's inauguration, the honors program warranted only the occasional mention in subsequent faculty senate minutes: Dr. Bell reporting on its progress in 1992 and asking for additional compensation for faculty teaching honors courses (a decision passed unanimously as well), his successor, Dr. Eglsaer, asking for changes in honors requirements (both in admissions and program criteria), mandatory advising, and an articulation agreement with the North Harris County Junior College in 1995 (which was successfully signed a year later), reiteration that the honors program could help attract qualified students in 1997, recognition of honors students at graduation in 2002, use of the honors program as an academic performance indicator and mention of it as a learning community in 2004 (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/15/1992, 10/29/1992, 12/03/1992, 06/15/1995,

10/31/1996, 12/04/1997, 11/07/2002, 1/15/2004, 09/30/2004).

The transition into an honors college merits little discussion of itself, the December 1st, 2008 faculty senate minutes commenting briefly “an honors college is being considered although this is in the early discussion phase.” The honors college is not brought up again until 2012 even though the switch was made in 2009, and when it is, its in regards to the customer service of the university, where honors students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences “reported [the] biggest problem was Financial Aid (loved their professors!)” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 10/18/2012). In 2013 the honors college was only mentioned because its lounge was being used for an informational about the Undergraduate Research Symposium (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 02/21/2013).

So, while Dr. Bell moved to Texas Tech to revitalize their honors program in 1993 (considering Dr. Richard F. Eglsaer’s fervent concern for the academic standards of the university and the quality of students enrolled, it should come as no surprise to learn he acquired the roll as the director of the honors program for the succeeding twelve years), the Elliot T. Bowers Honors Program moved from a new and exciting part of Sam Houston’s academic regime into a steady, exemplary aspect of the institution, where the metamorphosis to an honors *college* was a quiet title change rather than a radical evolutionary transformation. The events surrounding the change come with a familiar disposition, best summed by “Recently retired SHSU President Jim Gaertner [who] stated, ‘Honors college status will enhance the university’s ability to recruit high quality students and faculty and promote scholarship and research’” (SHSU, Honors

College Student Handbook 2013: 3). Indeed, academic restructuring, “ongoing efforts to enhance academic quality and integrity” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 03/20/2008), faculty quality and research, student enrollment and preparedness, campus improvements, outreach and communication with students, alumni and the community, and the future of higher education in the United States heralded the change in name though the content remained the same. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 02/21/2008, 03/20/2008, 4/10/2008, 08/02/2008, 10/16/2008, 11/06/2008, 12/01/2008, 01/22/2009, 02/12/2009, 03/19/2009, 04/23/2009).

University Of Texas – San Antonio and the UTSA Honors College

In light of Sam Houston State’s long and well-documented history, the University of Texas – San Antonio’s own account seems short and, in some areas, poorly constructed in comparison. Originally envisioned in 1959 as a “[University of Texas] of Austin model for Hispanics in San Antonio,” prestigious law school included, UTSA was ultimately based on Southwest Texas State Teachers College due to “opposition from Coordinating Board members” (Bernal 1999: 11) National and state level emphasis on education created the correct political environment to introduce the idea of a new institute of higher education in San Antonio focused on technology and science, and while it was found unfeasible by a Coordinating Board study, a reapportionment of state legislature, heralded by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Reynolds v. Sims*, increased metropolitan representation (Bernal 1999: 11-14). Frank Lombardino, a newly-elected representative for Bexar County, where San Antonio is

located, led the push for UTSA within the Texas House of Representatives and, combined with “better research” by the Coordinating Board, the bill passed on May 27th, 1969 (Bernal 1999: 14-16).

An Introduction to UTSA, a 1985 publication, notes that the University of Texas – San Antonio “is a young school,” the legislative act in 1969 launching the institution with the mission to “serve both graduates and undergraduates and ‘offer courses leading to such customary degrees as are offered at leading American universities,’” a goal completely realized by 1976 (pp. 5). The university does not appear to be stymied by the short history, commenting in the brochure that

Because UTSA is a young school, it has attracted a top-notch faculty eager to help build a new university. And the traditions and customs that could bind older universities to outdated programs do not exist here. Instead, this forward-looking university is strongly in tune with the demands of contemporary life and the education needed to meet the challenges of that life. (“An Introduction to UTSA” 1985: 5)

An extremely optimistic, and perhaps enlivened view. of a potential issue in that a young university is likewise a university without a history or a reputation, the key phrases in this description – “build a new university,” “[without] traditions and customs,” “forward-looking” – all point to a difficult aspect of archival research on UTSA. As the university had to determine it’s competitive function, structure, and organization within Texas higher education, the University of Texas system, and the community of San Antonio, there is a constant process of academic restructuring and planning not only so UTSA could be competitive as a regional school, but to later push into new playing fields as a research institution. As such, archival records on the institution itself are a miasma of mismatched information, missing data, and new acquisitions.

While this can encumber research, the spirit and direction of the university is still present in the midst of these documents, envisioning an institution that not only serves the Hispanic community, but “will become a national center of excellence for the education of Hispanics at the master’s and doctoral level,” lead research on Hispanic issues, and serve as a model of what a regional, metropolitan, and International, Inter-American university can be (Brochure, “1993-1994 Highlights” 1993). It’s a goal that almost ten years later appears to have been achieved, the focus now turned to becoming a Tier One institution.

But in 1985, in something of an opposite side of the same enrollment issue SHSU was having, UTSA was projecting that by the year 2000 enrollment would be “at 27,000-plus ... more than twice the size of the current student body. These figures are conservative, based on a growth rate of 4.9 percent – substantially below the six percent rate of recent years – and incorporating an expected dip in high school enrollments resulting from lower birthrates” (Wagener 1985). Similarly to SHSU, UTSA was seeking to be known as a prestigious university and handling enrollment rates was key to this issue, University President Wagener noting that “The University will face a sizeable challenge ... resources, initiative and thoughtful planning are essential to meet the needs for the new classrooms and laboratories, the library and computer resources and the additional faculty which this growth will demand,” a problem further exacerbated by the ever present issue of funding (Wagener 1985).

To Think, Question, and Excel. While there is very little documentation detailing the development of the honors program, what can be said is that it started in 1985, not

quite a “full-fledged honors program” but neither a departmental honors (though available at the time within the university colleges). UTSA’s 1984-1985 undergraduate catalog described the University Honors Program as

A rigorous four-year curriculum of disciplinary and interdisciplinary classes, supervised research, and ongoing faculty advisement. Honors students who are selected on the basis of grades, test scores, recommendations, and a writing sample, form a unique group within The University. Students wishing to apply for admission to The University Honors Program should write to the Director of the Program before the deadline for regular admission to The University. Students currently enrolled in The University who wish to apply for The Honors Program should contact the Program Director. (pp. 54)

The program itself was “accelerated,” opening for students in 1984, but official records hold to the fall of 1985 as its launch (*Quarterly* 1984: 2; “UTSA Profile” 1988; Undergraduate Course Catalog 1994-1996: 27; Undergraduate Course Catalog 2000-2001: 17). Students were required to have a SAT of 1200 and be in the top 10% of their class, while already enrolled UTSA students needed to have a 3.5 GPA and 30 or less credit hours, marking them as either a freshman or just entering their sophomore year (UTSA, *Quarterly* Summer 1984: 2). These requirements also marked them as exceptional academic students as their non-honors peers needed only an 850 on the SAT for automatic admission into the university or as the minimum requirement for GED students (the top 10% did not have any minimum requirements for ACT or SAT and the top 25% needed a 700 on the SAT and a 15 on the ACT) (Undergraduate Course Catalog 1984-1986: 50).

At this time UTSA did not have dorms available for students on campus, the direction of the university to be a commuting college, an interesting decision when compared with SHSU’s aversion to the idea, and scholarships do not appear to be

attached to the program until later, a 1989 account in faculty and staff newsletter, *The Roadrunner*, indicating that an anonymous donation allowed three honors students to receive book scholarships (Bernal 1999: 10; *Quarterly* 1984: 2; *The Roadrunner* 03/13/1989: 1; Undergraduate Course Catalog 1984-1986: 47). The next firm indication of any such scholarships shows up in the 1994-1996 undergraduate catalog, where “Honors students are also eligible for special scholarships, including Presidential Honors Scholarships, book awards, and the Lecture Patrons Scholarships” (pp. 80). According to the 1984 *Quarterly* article, honors students at this time also did not have a required number of honors credit hours for graduation, but rather “several interdisciplinary courses and seminars will be mandatory and students will participate in six hours of supervised research that will culminate in a project” (pp. 2),

While at this point in time the UTSA honors program didn’t reflect what would be considered a “full fledged honors program” when compared to similar programs or the 1994 National Collegiate Honors Council’s “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program,” noted even by the *Quarterly* as being dissimilar due to the lack of required honors credits, but over the succeeding years it grew to incorporate not only what the NCHC required, but what would eventually be an honors college. By 1987, “Introduction to Western Civilization” I and II is added to the undergraduate catalog and restricted to honors students, increasing the available honors courses beyond the required interdisciplinary courses and seminars (pp. 218). In 1991, the description for the University Honors Program expands to document the

four-year curriculum of special classes, supervised research, and ongoing faculty advisement, designed to provide superior students with the opportunity to obtain

an education [sic] that challenges them to think, question, and excel. To such students, the University Honors Program offers: small classes with greater opportunities for student participation than is found in most standard courses; increased student-faculty contact; greater individual attention; lively discussions of important issues; and opportunities for supervised research. (Undergraduate Course Catalog 1991-1993: 70)

At this point in time, an expanded honors curriculum of both general education coursework and special seminars is also made available to students. Three years later, the honors program appears to be a “full-fledged honors program,” offering not only advertising scholarships and “a unique selection of interdisciplinary seminars and Core Curriculum courses while fulfilling ... major requirements,” but also requiring student complete all the course work (where as previously students could choose to take some honors classes, but not all and would ultimately not graduate with “University Honors Program Honors” distinction), write an honors thesis, and maintain a GPA of 3.25 (Undergraduate Course Catalog 1991-1993: 70; Undergraduate Course Catalog 1994-1996: 80-81).

Admission requirements were moderately changed (see table 2), requiring incoming freshman to have an SAT of 1100 rather than 1200, an ACT of 28, or be among the top 10% of their graduating class. While the honors admission requirements had decreased slightly, it was still searching for a student in a definitively different league than their non-honors peers, especially as the general requirements of university admission had not changed at all from when the honors program first opened (Undergraduate Course Catalog 1994-1996: 72, 80-81). Subsequent undergraduate catalogs show slight modifications to the honors program admission requirements and deadlines (1996-1998: SAT of 1180 or ACT of 26, general requirements remain the

Table 2: University of Texas - San Antonio Admission Requirements

Admission Requirement	Catalog Year									
	1994-1996		1996-1998		1998-1999		1999-2000		2013	
University-Wide	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
Top 10%	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	No Minimum	Guaranteed Admission	Guaranteed Admission
Top 25% (not apart of top 10%)	700	18	700 (Recentered:8 30)	18	700 (Recentered:8 30)	17	830	17	Guaranteed Admission	Guaranteed Admission
Second 25%	750	19	750 (Recentered:8 70)	19	750 (Recentered:8 70)	18	870	18	Guaranteed: 1100 Committee Review: ≥ 900	Guaranteed: 24 Committee Review: ≥ 19
Third 25%	800	21	800 (Recentered:9 20)	21	800 (Recentered:9 20)	19	920	19	Committee Review: ≥ 1100	Committee Review: ≥ 21
Fourth 25%	850	22	850 (Recentered:9 70)	22	850 (Recentered:9 70)	20	970	20	Committee Review: ≥ 1100	Committee Review: ≥ 24
GED Test	850	22	850 (Recentered:9 70)	22	850 (Recentered:9 70)	20	970	20	Committee Review	Committee Review
Honors Program/College										
Top 10%	1100	28	1180 (Recentered)	26	1000 (Recentered)	22	1000	22	1200*	27*
Top 20%	---	---	---	---	1200 (Recentered)	27	1200	27	---	---

Compiled from UTSA Undergraduate Catalogs for 1994-2000, UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections, current university admission requirements available online at <http://www.utsa.edu/admissions/undergrad/requirements/2013-requirements.html>, and current honors college admission requirements available at <http://honors.utsa.edu/applications/applyfreshman.php#step2top>.

* Honors students need to fulfill only one of the three admission requirements, and to enter the scholarship competition they must have either a SAT of 1200, or an ACT of 27, or be in the top 20% of their graduating class.

** From 2000 on, undergraduate catalogs no longer detail admission requirements, presumably because they were moved online.

same) and an increase in available honors courses, very little changed, though honors students began to be advised directly through the honors program itself, which also oversaw college credit classes for high school students (Undergraduate Course Catalog 1996-1998: 74, 83-84, 499-500; Undergraduate Course Catalog 1998-1999: 24, 76, 84-86, 515-516; Undergraduate Catalog 1999-2000: 80, 90-91; Undergraduate Catalog 2000-2002: 413-414). When the honors program transitioned into an honors college in 2002, there was very little else that needed to change beyond the name.

The Importance of Academic Quality. While there is no available documentation to elaborate the decision making process behind these changes in the honors program, the University of Texas – San Antonio was concerned with its move to a doctoral institution, evincing a forward thinking mindset in its goal of becoming one of Texas’s

more prestigious universities. In 1994, a proposal for an “Academic Quality Enhancement Program” was submitted to the faculty senate which “addressed most of the core issues and concerns that have been discussed in the institution over a number of years” (“Meeting Minutes”: 04/12/94). While this may potentially seem to target a particular set of students, the focus was actually on faculty and “providing the necessary resources to assist ... in developing research potential and interests ... the program also emphasizes the importance of academic quality as an objective and criterion for planning, and is an attempt to bring items of academic quality to the core for planning purposes,” including issues of faculty workload (both tenure and non-tenure track), “teaching effectiveness enhancement, small grants for professional development, new faculty orientation and mentorship, and competitive faculty research leaves,” with some suggestions that it might include merit pay as well (“Meeting Minutes”: 04/12/94). So while Sam Houston State University seemed more concerned with the quality of students admitted to the university and developing the university to reflect and attract these students, the University of Texas – San Antonio placed a stronger emphasis on creating a faculty environment, perhaps with the idea that this would presuppose the equipping of less academically prepared students and draw those students already ahead of their peers.

This mindset seems to be supported by state legislature, 1994 Senate Bill 5 rider “appeared [with] the intent of rewarding universities for using more tenure-track faculty. The actual implementation of this penalizes universities which rely very heavily upon non-tenure-track faculty, especially in lower division undergraduate courses” (“Meeting Minutes”: 11/08/94). For UTSA, this rider meant a continued focus on “teaching and

research output” to the extent that faculty workload and merit policies were undergoing revisions to reflect

three University objectives: enhance the academic quality of both teaching and scholarship; increase the University’s focus on the quality and nature of lower division undergraduate education through more involvement by its tenured faculty; and continue to develop and implement quality graduate (particularly doctoral) programs ... the intent of [the new] workload policy is to match interests and strengths of faculty with the needs of the division ... Performance criteria for merit pay evaluation are adjusted to reflect differential expectations between the teaching and research function ... faculty are able to choose a distribution of effort for teaching, research, and service. This distribution of effort is reflected in weights which are directly linked to merit evaluation. (“Meeting Minutes”: 11/08/94)

Interestingly, the options available to tenured faculty allow for a heavy teaching load over research, but tenure-track faculty are automatically assigned to options where research is equal to or greater than the amount of teaching required. In all of these, service is the least of the university’s concern.

A Learner-Centered Community. None of this is to imply that UTSA does not have concern for the students of the university. Even while the above discussion focuses on faculty quality and capability, for teaching effectiveness to be a significant component of these policies shows that the university is concerned about the students enrolled in the university. While funding seems to be a major motivation for various academic policies – Senate Bill 5’s rider on tenured faculty teaching and conjecture in 1998 that “State Legislature will designate funds for retention efforts, mainly directed towards ‘gateway courses’” leading to proposals for “improving such courses” (“Meeting Minutes”: 11/10/1998) and increasing freshmen retention rates (“Meeting

Minutes”: 11/08/94, 11/10/1998, 02/09/1999) – the efforts directed towards creating viable proposals to handle these situation must show some benefit for the students.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools sent a committee in April of 2000 for a Reaffirmation of Accreditation Self-Study, “an important milestone in UTSA’s development ... that has tremendous potential to shape how UTSA defines itself as a university in the coming decade” (“Meeting Minutes”: 09/14/1999). The focus of this particular self-study was to be a “learner-centered community ... the issues being addressed include faculty and staff performance, incentives and rewards, student learning and development, instructional program development and the culture and community of the University” (“Meeting Minutes”: 09/14/1999), indicating a move by UTSA to increase the centrality of the student in the institution, though the push for accreditation leaves some of the motivation suspect. By September of the next year, UTSA had succeeded in moving towards a learner-centered environment, the Provost reporting to the faculty senate that ten such communities were in practice at the university at that time. While this likewise succeeding in aiding the students, along with the freshman seminars, college advising center and “expanded supplemental instruction activities,” the original frame of this is curious as it is discussed adjacent to “the transition to research status as an institution,” a status supported strongly by the University System, state government, and city of San Antonio (“Meeting Minutes”: 09/12/2000).

While it could perhaps be stated that the connection between the two is incidental, a university should be concerned with the development of its students as they

are its primary function, this does not seem to be the case. There is no greater example of a learner-centered community than an honors program, particularly a full-fledged honors program like the one in place at UTSA at the time. And a year later, when UTSA had restructured the university once again (“Meeting Minutes”: 11/10/98, 09/12/00) and was in the midst of the push towards research status, a proposal was submitted for an honors *college* and stated expressly by Dr. Richard Diem, director of the honors program, that

the proposal for an Honors College was developed with the idea of assisting the University to move towards becoming a Research I institution ... the proposal does not require a new degree or any new programs, it does not have to be submitted to UT System or the Coordinating Board. The establishment of the Honors College is important to the students since they would graduate with a degree from their individual colleges as well as in the Honors College. The proposed curriculum for the Honors College is essentially the same as the current Honors Program ... Dr. Rutherford asked how many classes would have to be added, how many students would be in each class, and how many new faculty would be needed. Dr. Diem responded that the Honors College would operate in the same manner as the current Honors Programs. (“Meeting Minutes”: 09/25/2001)

Here, mention is made of the outcomes of this decision on students, but the focus does not begin with them, but rather the move to a Research I institution. Similar to SHSU, there is little to be made of this change beyond the implication an honors *college* would have on the university itself as the curriculum and structure within it remain largely unchanged. So, with the university aimed toward becoming a Research I institution¹, a

¹ This is a goal UTSA has ostensibly reached as under the current Carnegie Classification they are listed as a Research University with high research activity. But as the classifications underwent a change in 2005 to differentiate between levels of research, UTSA’s new focus is to become a tier one institution, among the ranks of University of Texas - Austin, Texas A&M University – College Station, and Rice University. While this seems the logical next step for such a future-focused institution, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is pushing for more tier one universities as “Texas is losing ground in the global

2002 proposal submitted to the faculty senate asking that research laboratories ensure contributions to this mission by “focus[ing] on three criteria: 1) number of graduate students associated with each laboratory; 2) amount of grant monies obtained for research in each laboratory; and, 3) number and quality of publications attributed to work performed in each laboratory” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 02/26/2002), the segue into an honors college was made.

The new program officially opened in the fall of 2002 and has proceeded to become one of the academic highlights of the university as “more than 50 percent of Honors College graduate have been accepted into postgraduate universities and medical and professional schools,” an achievement found as important as the College of Business being “nationally ranked by *Princeton Review*, *BusinessWeek*, and *HispanicBusiness*,” the College of Engineering holding the North American Energy Summit, the College of Liberal and Fine Arts “rank[ing] second in the UT System for external research funding in arts, humanities and social sciences,” the collaboration of the College of Sciences with “other leading research institutions such as Southwest Research Institute,” The College of Public Policy’s Center for Policy Studies being among the “top five certifying institutions in the U.S. for American Humanics, a program ... to prepare professionals to lead nonprofit organizations,” and the College of Architecture, Construction and Planning “rank[ing] first in the nation in awarding degrees to Hispanic Students” (Academic Highlights 2014).

competitive market,” and has subsequently “identified seven state universities (called emerging research universities) that have the momentum and potential to become Tier One.” State legislature created the National Research University Fund (NRUF) in 2009 and “only the seven emerging research universities are eligible to compete for some \$550 million reserved in the NRUF” (“Tier One UTSA”).

Conclusion

Despite differences in age and mission between Sam Houston State University and University of Texas – San Antonio, both show a myriad of similar circumstances surrounding the launch of the honors programs and subsequent transition into an honors college, the key aspect to boost university prestige. While a university is at its heart an educational institution, seeking to provide both human and social capital to its students, it would be imprudent to overlook the fact that a university is also largely financial. It is difficult to provide premier education to even one student without the proper funding, and for a university to continue past its first graduating class and onto its next, it requires an increasing amount of both students and money, neither of which is lost to either university. While enrollment and retention appears in both situations to be of serious concern to university officials, this discourse prominently segues into a discussion of financial capabilities. Sam Houston State University shows some of this in various reports, memoranda, and meeting minutes: the desire for increased retention and involvement of students associated with the increase in later participation with the alumni association as well as some back and forth between Dr. Gary Bell and various officials at the start of the Elliot T. Bowers Honors Program releasing monies and thanking necessary parties (as Ms. Emily Post would recommend is polite manners). University of Texas – San Antonio emulates this idea even further, every change or accommodation made to students seeming to be linked to some larger (likely legislative) project, which would increase the funding of the university itself.

But in something of a circular process, it is difficult to justify financial assistance when previous evidence shows it is unlikely anything is come of it. Universities apply this logic to students, using various criteria (academic, athletic, or otherwise), and they similarly apply this logic to themselves as they would expect this is what endowers will be reviewing before making any contributions. As such, focus is remitted to the capabilities and functions of the faculty, students, and the facility. The ability to produce research and engage both educators and educated, to demonstrate effectiveness in education and attraction of intellect. If a university is incapable of showing its nature as a place of education and research, somewhere a person might enroll or employ, there is little reason to invest in it in the first place.

It is here the honors program emerges, an indirect revenue generator via an emblem of prestige. The university seeks the academically talented students to showcase its ability to attract intellect and to facilitate research. For both universities, the honors program arrived at a time where they wanted not only to evince its educational might, but also when they were undergoing structural changes in concert with these goals. It was developed and evolved in a manner to attract as many of the correct students as possible; providing quality housing and facilities, early enrollment, scholarships, small classrooms, research opportunities, and professorial interactions. And it appears to have worked, in collaboration with other university efforts, to increase enrollment and draw students to the university itself. And as both pushed towards loftier university goals, primarily that of research status, the transition from an honors program to an honors

college provided a simple addition to these efforts in much the same way that repainting can brighten up an old space; nothing changes, but it looks nicer. Smarter.

CHAPTER IV

UNIVERSITIES, HONORS COLLEGES, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The original question of this study— “Why did honors programs and honors colleges developed at University of Texas – San Antonio and Sam Houston State University?” – appears to have been answered. The honors program is a result of academic changes and processes within the university in order to raise prestige for the institution by drawing in high quality students, which will hopefully help raise the academic standard of the university, creating more prestige, which will result in an increase of financial endowments. As such, it becomes the cycle discussed previously in the literature review and the conclusion of the last chapter; a university needs to draw in students and money to survive and the more of each it draws in, the more prestige it has, which in turn draws in more students and money. An honors program or college aids this process by attracting high quality students and faculty, which will “promote research and scholarship” (SHSU, Honors College Student Handbook 2013:3). The transition to an honors college is born out of these same circumstances, but offers little structural changes to the program itself. It’s a rebranding of sorts, a newer model and more ergonomic design for the 21st century, but at its core it hold the same ideas and functions as its predecessor.

But upon review of the documentation revolving around these events, it becomes clear that there are some underlying processes and concerns which go beyond the simple answer of promoting research and scholarship via undergraduate extraordinaires. Appearing beneath this is a thread of elitism, binding together the constant struggle for

prestige through merit, preoccupation with finances, debate over academic standards and admissions requirements, and investment in program benefits. It is here that this chapter ruminates, hoping to reveal and elucidate these issues and their connections to each other.

Threads of Elitism

Perhaps it is redundant to focus yet again on the prestigious aspect of this process. From one angle it would require a Bourdieu-ian deconstruction of education itself, which he and others have already preceded in doing; the conclusion being that education, while useful in some aspects of training, has an ultimate focus on prestige and will do what is necessary to maintain this level of status through gatekeeping. And it could likewise be concisely stated that the honors program has its own concerns with prestige as it has been bequeathed to them by their parent university, a goal inherent to the environment in which they were born. But central to this discussion is a return to distributive justice, where prestige is the goal and meritocracies are the method.

As discussed in the literature review, distributive justice is an overarching term for the methods used to dole out resources among the masses. For education, these resources include material assets (facilities, equipment, and the like), immaterial assets (faculty knowledge and teaching, influence in system processes and policies), and the financial capital to not only acquire and maintain the above, but also aid students. The goal of SHSU and UTSA is to develop and maintain prestige, evident in their recent pushes towards research status, and even before hand with the focus on elevating the

student population, available faculty, and research output. Likewise, both universities point to other institutions as examples of their own goals; SHSU comparing its honors program to that of Texas A&M University (TAMU) and others while UTSA was originally envisioned as a University of Texas – Austin (UT) for Hispanics and has since cited a desire to be ranked with high status Texas universities like TAMU, UT, and Rice (Bernal 1999: 11; SHSU Faculty Senate Minutes: 04/14/1988; “Tier One UTSA”).

In view of this goal, resources will be distributed as fairly as possible, but directed in efforts to increase academic capability and research output. Meritocracies provides a simpler method for achieving this goal, using selective academic criteria to narrow the pool of candidates able to receive the goods. Meritocracies also provide a justification for selecting particular sets of students and eliminating others through contests of individual achievements. The premise of a meritocracy does not appear to be illogical in its format; based on personal achievement, students have the ability to direct their own destinies. In their conclusion of *The Shape of the River*, William G. Bowen and Derek Bok accurately point out what Robert Spurrer seemed to be suggesting in his discussion of athletic teams and surgeons, “we certainly do not want institutions to admit candidates who *lack* merit, however the term is defined ... no one should be admitted who cannot take advantage of the educational opportunities being offered” (1998: 276).

The problem, which Bowen and Bok continue on to discuss, is that determining what is fair based on individual merit leads to several issues: 1) grades and test scores don’t reflect efforts made by students, but are a measure of particular assumptions about intelligence, 2) universities are looking for those students who best fit their mission, 3)

current merit criteria cannot determine if students enrolled will actually take advantage of the resources and education to eventually reinvest in society at large, and 4) reflect the diversity and culture for a community to thrive (or as Bowen and Bok illustrate it, perhaps it would be more fair to add a carrot rather than a potato to a stew if the stew is already full of potatoes) (1998: 276-278).

Added to this is the question of opportunity and outcomes. Often these students' destinies have been determined from an early age through their family circumstances and the subsequent personal achievements affirm what has been brewing for a long time (Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2014; Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Lareau 1987). Meritocracies, then, as a form of distributive justice must in many cases be found as a justification for elitism rather than a subversion of it. It is easy to say that a meritocracy is an ideology, a belief system that must be argued against, but if these honors colleges are any indication, it is no longer simply an ideology, but rather a practice, one that has begun decades past on a university level and rooted itself deeply enough to warrant programs instituted just for this purpose.

Finances. One of the most obvious forms of distributive justice is how monetary resources are divided among a population, and it is in many ways especially relevant to higher education for the reasons mentioned earlier in the chapter as well as the concerns listed in the literature review. UTSA's ever-present drive for legislative endowments provides a prime example of how universities strive for a portion of the investments themselves, and the same process of disbursement is present within the universities themselves. Indeed, a large source of debate in meritocracies centers around the financial

aid available to students, where many fear how needs-based aid is being replaced by merit-based aid (Liu 2011; Pressler 2009). Overtly, this seems like a non-issue. According to the theory of distributive justice, universities only have so much financial recourse to help students, it's an issue which Dr. Eglsaer at Sam Houston was quick to point out to Dr. Anisman during discussions of remediation in the September 16th, 1989 SHSU Faculty Senate meeting. As such, choosing a merit focused method of distribution should be as equal a method of distributing monies as any, reaching students across class barriers and easing their financial burdens based on their individual abilities rather than focusing on their family backgrounds. Yet studies of this matter largely find the opposite, matching instead Bourdieu's understanding of education as being used to prevent groups of students from advancement through formal and informal requirements (Bourdieu 1998; Griffith 2011; Karabel and Astin 1975; Liu 2011; Pressler 2009).

Finances can play a key role in determining who will receive a college education and who will not, particularly for lower income students, and the discussion of financial support at Sam Houston State University reveals a disturbing focus on the academically advanced students. Returning back to the September 21st, 1989 Faculty Senate minutes, the assembly was discussing the academic standards of the university. The first consideration of this issue was in 1984, the idea to implement standardized testing to ensure students were meeting requirements, a common recourse in most educational matters which has been criticized for being biased towards white, middle to upper class students (Karabel & Astin 1975; Jencks and Phillips 1998; Ehrenberg, Zhang, and Levin 2006; Griffith 2011; Liu 2011). The second, and in some ways more concerning for how

overt the implication appears, is a question of how to handle a cap on enrollment juxtaposed to students in need of remediation. Senator Eglsaer asks “Is the university for all? Are we in the business of remediation?” This is a concerning sentiment for a university praised by alum Dan Rathers for being accessible for first-generation college students and having a faculty who cares about its students (Cashion 2004: xi-xiii). The president of the university is quick to respond to the senator that “Remediation is fact of life ... another word for remediation is education,” but Senator Eglsaer almost seemed to anticipate this, the minutes transcribing subsequently that “he was worried about SHSU’s funds for remediation,” an issue President Anisman was also quick to dismiss as being a constant problem for education in general (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/21/1989).

The students in question already appear to be ill-favored, the enrollment cap potentially being a reason to prevent their admission, but when they are defended by President Anisman, the distribution of funds comes into question. Does SHSU even have the money to remediate the unequipped students we are proposing to enroll? This thought process implies something much larger, suggesting that if it is politically or socially incorrect to dismiss the students outright because they are not at the respectable academic level, it is more justifiable to dismiss them because there is no money for them. This is not to pit President Anisman as Robin Hood against Senator Eglsaer’s Sherriff of Nottingham. While Anisman and Eglsaer appear so in the meeting minutes, the faculty senate is a representation of the faculty at large and in the 1990 faculty survey, over half of the faculty found the admissions standards less than adequate. And

while Eglsaer is perhaps a representation of a broader sentiment within the faculty, Anisman is not guiltless in the situation, for when an honors program is proposed, the question is never if there is money, but where to find it. Correspondence and reports from the honors committee and director to various university officials relate the allotment of \$60,000 to renovate a dorm for the students – to “enhance our commitment to the Honors Program” (SHSU, Honors Program Correspondence 12/8/1989) – and redirecting of the Augusta Lawrence scholarship funds for the honors program (SHSU, Honors Program Correspondence 12/8/1989; 03/15/1990).

The scholarships for the Elliot T. Bowers Honors Program indicate how strong the desire was for high quality students. As mentioned in the last chapter, the institutional effectiveness report done in 1995 shows that at that time approximately 150 honors students were receiving a third of the available university-wide scholarships, which does not include outside scholarships or departmental scholarships the students might have received as well. While there is no current available data on the distribution of scholarships, and there is no information on the socioeconomic class of the students admitted, the demographic spectrum of the honors college is available with current data, and this provides a concerning look on those students who are receiving an honors education and funding.

Among the goals of the honors program, as outlined by the institutional effectiveness plan, is that “The Honors Program will strive to reflect diversity in the Program by its recruitment efforts. Specifically, the ethnic, geographic and demographic blend of the Program will parallel the ethnic, geographic blend of the University”

Table 3: Demographic Comparison of Sam Houston University and the Elliot T. Bower Honors College

Year	Percentage of Race Within Specified Population																			
	White		Black		Hispanic		Other		American Indian		Asian/Pacific Islander		International		2+ Races		Unknown		First Generation**	
	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON	SHSU	HON
1990	79%	89%	14%	0%	6%	7%	1%	4%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1991	78%	90%	15%	3%	6%	3%	1%	3%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1992	76%	87%	16%	3%	6%	8%	2%	3%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1993	76%	90%	15%	5%	7%	0%	2%	5%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1994	75%	90%	16%	2%	7%	5%	1%	2%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
2006*	71.3%	82.9%	14.4%	7.3%	11.4%	4.9%	---	---	0.7%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.9%	4.9%	---	---	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%	46.3%
2007*	70.1%	82.8%	14.7%	3.5%	12.4%	11.5%	---	---	0.7%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	0.8%	0.0%	---	---	0.0%	0.0%	57.4%	52.9%
2008*	69.4%	75.0%	15.2%	6.3%	12.6%	12.5%	---	---	0.7%	0.0%	1.3%	4.2%	0.9%	2.1%	---	---	0.0%	0.0%	56.8%	41.7%
2009	67.0%	67.0%	16.0%	5.2%	13.8%	15.7%	---	---	0.7%	0.0%	1.6%	1.7%	0.9%	2.6%	---	---	0.0%	0.0%	55.1%	40.0%
2010	64.1%	81.4%	16.2%	3.1%	15.7%	7.8%	---	---	0.5%	0.8%	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%	3.9%	95.0%	1.6%	0.2%	1.6%	53.0%	28.7%
2011	61.2%	66.2%	16.6%	5.4%	15.0%	15.5%	---	---	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%	1.4%	2.6%	8.1%	84.0%	1.4%	2.6%	2.0%	35.9%	13.5%
2012	58.1%	62.7%	17.1%	7.2%	17.0%	19.6%	---	---	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	2.8%	4.6%	1.6%	2.6%	2.2%	2.0%	37.7%	26.8%
2013	55.3%	60.4%	17.6%	9.4%	17.7%	13.0%	---	---	0.4%	0.7%	1.1%	2.1%	3.8%	6.8%	2.8%	3.5%	1.3%	4.0%	39.0%	27.8%

Data Compiled from the SHSU, 1995, "Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1994," and SHSU, 2014, "Honors Tracking Study."

* It should be noted that between 2006 and 2008, the honors college had less than 100 people in it: 41 in 2006, 87 in 2007, and 96 in 2008.

** This is not a minority specific category, but encompasses all first generation college students.

*** Data is not available for the intervening years of 1995-2005.

(SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan 1995). It is somewhat consternating when hypothesis 1 of goal 1B, “the ethnicity of students in the honors program will reflect the ethnicity of students that are accepted to the University,” is considered supported while the associated table (see table 3) consistently shows the honors program housing an average of 90% white students and 2.6% black students, while SHSU’s demographics portray a student body between 75-80% white and 15% black. While a claim could almost be made that the percentage of Hispanic students in the honors program resembles the university, the amount of “other” students moderately exceeds what is found in the general student populace (SHSU, Honors Program, Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995: 13).

In view of this data, it seems questionable to assert the honors program reflects the diversity found in the university, and it remains questionable to this day, particularly when the percentage of minority (which interestingly does not include Asian or

International students) is roughly ten percent less than what is found in the university and first generation students fluctuate between 5% and 22% less of a student population that is already decreasing. When broken down further, white honors students consistently meet or exceed the university even though they are decreasing proportionally within the student population. In 2013, there were 20% more white first-time freshmen in the honors college than the university, while black first-time freshmen honors students are 13% less than the university, numbers which are sadly consistent between a comparison of total student populations and honors student populations. Hispanic honors students offer a sort of middle minority, occasionally exceeding but typically at or below the same level in the university.

These percentages may seem nominal in the outset, particularly as minority students comprise about 40% of the university and honors college's student population, but when divided into their pieces and reviewed, these amount become concerning. While the total black student population of the honors college in 2013 is percentage-wise 8% smaller than what is found in the university, comparing the number of black students against each other, what this actually means is that the honors college has only about half as many black students as what would be expected from the university at large. Following this, there are 10% more white students, and almost twice as many Asian/Pacific Islander and International honors students in the honors college as in the university, and a third less than the Latino student population.

Whether this is overt racism, or some secondhand social subconscious decision, the matter remains the same to deny opportunity to minority students. While in many

cases the outcomes of these collegiate situations are subject to an extensive set of social forces beyond the university itself, and some may argue are irreversible at this point as most outcomes (both educational and otherwise) seem to be determined early in a student's life, further exclusions at this stage will only continue to exacerbate the issue rather than seek to remedy them. Universities seem to agree to a point with the irreversibility of social outcomes, providing ways for less academically "talented" students to participate in higher education through remedial education, but funneling the majority of resources to those students who appear to be more prepared for the world and fit the idea of a "citizen scholar," or a "cultivated man" as Max Weber might suggest. This also leads to an interesting exploration about how whiteness is perceived at a university level. Asian and International students are considered by SHSU as an "other" category in the 1990s (similarly, a 1992 needs report from UTSA referring to this set of students as "Orientals," a pejorative term that signals an exotic, non-white nature) but they are not counted among the minority students even in 2013, their demographic numbers in the honors college in many ways on par with white students in that they typically reflect the same percent of Asian students within the university. In the mean time Latino students appear to bridge an awkward gap between white and black, as though they are minority enough to count for numbers, but not upset the status quo, some authors suggesting that Latino and American Indian students must "act white" to reach a level of achievement while Asian students are stereotypically perceived as being as intelligent and hardworking as their white counterparts (if not more so), which may be

what is reflected here (Oakes and Guiton 1995; Oakes, Wells, Jones, Datnow 1997; Ogbu 2004; Carter 2006).

Admission and Academic Standards. Many of these racial issues are overlooked as simply the lack of available black or Hispanic students to meet the qualifications of the honors college. The few minority students who do enter into the honors college can be held up as pillars of meritocracy, where anyone can arrive if they just work hard enough. By this logic, the distribution of resources to a majority of white students is fair. They have received better grades and test scores, so they should receive the resources the university has to offer. But this perspective is argued by many scholars, who point out that the development of testing materials and the skills required to succeed in school are based on a white middle-to-upper class education, which hampers working class and minority students who are typically not familiar with the behavior, terminology, and ideas necessitated by this educational structure. This is a part of a larger discussion of the human, social, and cultural capital implicitly required by educational institutions for students to succeed, where high socio-economic status students already in possession of the social and cultural capital can achieve their prestigious heights while their low SES counterparts are taught the skills, behaviors, and knowledge to become plebian participants in society for its upkeep (Blau and Duncan 1967; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu 1986; Bowles and Gintis 2002).

Authors Karl L. Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson argue race as an added factor in *The Long Shadow: Family Background, Disadvantaged Background, and the Transition to Adulthood* (2014). Their longitudinal study in Baltimore found that

even compared to low-income white children, minority students still have poorer educational and occupational outcomes as a result of family disadvantage (parents' education and social capital, family income, neighborhood context, personal resources, and the like) which effects the schools that children will enroll in and their subsequent performance. By the time these students reach college, their trajectory was largely fixed by the initial family disadvantage and how it developed in conjunction with their educational environment. This indicates that the meritocratic measures of a student are determined less by the actual efforts of the individual and more on the external factors that have hampered those efforts from the beginning (Blau & Duncan 1967; Haller and Portes 1973; Karabel & Astin 1975; Buchmann & Diprete 2006; Alexander, Entwisle, Olson 2007; Reardon 2014). A common argument against this is that family disadvantage can be overcome through parental involvement and the lack thereof is truly the issue at hand. Again, research refutes this, finding that while low SES and minority parents have the same goals for their children as middle-to-upper class white parents and are involved in their child's education, a lack of cultural capital and the knowledge of when and how to activate this capital impedes the parents' ability to negotiate the hidden curriculum and politics of education (Lareau & Horvat 1999; Dumais 2002).

The result of this is that by the time students reach college the admission standards to enroll are already seemingly insurmountable, barring consideration of an honors college which expects students to have attained even higher levels of achievement. As discussed in the previous chapter, the admission standards for both SHSU and UTSA's honors colleges far exceed the requirements for university admission

by at least 200 points on the SAT and 6 points on the ACT. Based on these requirements, students applying to the honors colleges would have met the requirements for the highest level of admission performance, and students applying to the UTSA honors program in its early years would have been admitted to UTSA automatically even by their present admission standards, which have become particularly rigorous. Table 2 on page 44 evinces the university's drive to be tier one even among its student population, guaranteeing admission to the top 25%, while students below that mark must go through a committee review to be offered access. This points back to the over-arching critique of meritocracies and merit-based aid in that many times the students admitted to the honors colleges are among those white middle-to-upper class students who do not need the resources and provided by such an enrollment in the first place.

Program Benefits. As mentioned earlier, distributive justice is not singularly related to financial resources, but also to other material goods. Enrollment in the honors college is not simply access to scholarship funds, but also specialty housing, facility use, computer access, early registration and cultural trips and experiences. University officials argue that access to these resources is not an elitist maneuver, Dr. Gary Bell stating of the Elliot T. Bower Honors Program in 1990 that:

providing a separate residence hall for Honors students is not segregation. "We wanted to give a sense of community to the program," he said. "Many times these students arrive at SHSU and feel like outsiders because their classmates may not be as motivated as they are. This way, they can be in contact with others with the same motivation."

There is evidence that learning communities of like-minded people are beneficial for students, particularly for minorities, as it provides not only interactions with similar

individuals, but more personalized interactions between students and educators, allowing individuals to better adjust, navigate, and overcome the additional challenges they may face at a particular institution (Goldsmith 2004; Telles and Ortiz 2013; “Blueprint for Excellence”; “Student Needs Survey Report” 1992; Title V Assessment Plan 2000). Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton found in *Paying for the Party* that collegiate success was impacted by the types of students an individual lived, noting that several girls living in a party dorm who were not interested in being partiers moved to learning environments better suited for their goals and achieved greater success than their peers who remained in that environment as isolates, due to the fact that “students’ social experiences are deeply intertwined with academic success” (2014: 98).

But this leads to some concerning questions about the legitimacy of learning communities, particularly as minority and first generation learning communities were seeking institutionalization at UTSA, yet it required a push by the Texas legislature and a competition with Texas A&M University to inspire such measure in the university itself (Correspondence 2000). Even though such measures have been found to be effective for low-income and minority students, it is the academically advanced learning communities that appear to receive the initial university support for their creation due to the fact that they coincide with a larger university objective. And beyond simple institutional legitimacy is a difference in actual incentivized legitimacy, where the learning communities are so supported by the institution that students are given premier benefits for their participation.

In a small manner, this makes sense. If a university intends to draw higher achieving students and require more from them, they need to compete with more than just ideas as it is unlikely that any human would generally choose to do more work for less personal gain. But once the scholarship aspect, or perhaps the living accommodations, have been provided for, is it necessary to extend these privileges to special access to university facilities and exclusive trips to cultural events? What is particularly special about honors students that they would have a need for a private library study room or trip to the museum that other, non-honors students don't require? Even the types of events that are selected for honors students to participate in show a remarkable tilt toward high-brow events, "i.e. ballet, symphony, opera, and museum programs" (SHSU, Honors Handbook 1992) and mocking the less academically prestigious, a 1992 memo from the SHSU Honors Student Advisory Council inviting students to an academic competition questionably named "the ONNERS SMARTFEST 1 1/2!!" whose proceeds go to the cultural events funds.

From this perspective, the honors college isn't simply inviting top students into the university, but also cultivating those students once they have arrived by giving them access to cultural resources unavailable to the rest of the university population. Following a Bourdieu-ian perspective, this is taking those students who have already obtained the social and cultural capital to achieve educational success and providing them with the ability to maintain and potentially exacerbate the lag between them and their non-honors peers. It also seems to suggest that those students who are not participating in honors programs are not capable of reaching the lofty goals, and are

therefore never given the opportunities to reorient themselves towards the same quality education honors students are capable of receiving. Honors education and the benefits offered therein are expressly for those who have already arrived in the Olympic halls of education, not for those still working out how to kill a hydra or steal a golden apple, particularly when the educational structure makes it unlikely that they ever will.

This also leads to questions about early registration, where the mindset is that the honors students need to be ensured that they will be enrolled in the courses they need to graduate. The implications of this are far reaching as it suggests either that the rest of the student population has no desire to graduate on time or as soon as feasible – which is unlikely as student debt continues to rise – or that honors student graduations are more important than their non-honors peers. This may be true for a university seeking a higher status, but what of Dr. Anisman’s idea that “if we cannot give them a chance, then we should not accept them” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 09/21/1989). While Dr. Anisman was focused specifically on graduation, it follows that a broader version of this statement should be asked; if a university is not going to give its students a *fair* chance, meaning an unbiased equal opportunity to compete, it should not be accepting them. Idealistically, it sullies education by making it’s sole focus on profit and status, but practically, it harms students by offering them an education which may ultimately achieve little for them and a debt that will likely follow them for life.

Adding to this, honors students are receiving an education from premier faculty members, the proposition seeming to vacillate between giving faculty free reign to try new teaching techniques and providing students with leading faculty members who will

give them a passionate, personalized education via small class sizes. While the prestige of the faculty may be a part of the incentives to bring students into the honors programs, there is little evidence to suggest high achieving students will learn better from top-rated teachers. Research suggests rather than high-achieving students will succeed no matter their educational environment, likely because their family background will provide where the school has not, while low-achieving students show improvement with high-ranking teachers (Coleman 1966; Blau & Duncan 1967, Haller and Portes 1973, Buchmann & Diprete 2006). Similarly, the supposed pedagogical laboratory function of the honors college seems to be lacking as there is nothing to suggest Paul Strong's skunkworks idea of honors education, hinted at by Dr. Bell in a newspaper interview hoping that the honors program might be an example for the university, is actually being enacted at either university (Strong 2006; Anderson 1990). If the honors college is used for anything within the university at large, it appears to be as evidence of the university's commitment to elite education (SHSU, Honors Program Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1994; Magness 1995; SHSU Faculty Senate Minutes: 12/04/97, 01/15/04; SHSU Blueprint for Excellence).

While not of a specific focus to this particular study, it also become apparent that honors programs shows some indications of privilege for instructors as well as students, policies passing in faculty senate meetings allowing "faculty who team teach Honors Program courses above their normal teaching load [to] be given one-course release when the equivalent of one-course work has been performed" as well as additional research compensation for teaching honors students. (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes:

02/01/1990, 10/29/1992). The fact that such ideas were not only passed unanimously, but likewise that when “proved unworkable since the funds available are salary funds and state law forbids using these for operations and maintenance,” alternatives were proposed and ultimately “these faculty [will] be compensated with a prorated portion of one eighth of their nine month salary” (SHSU, Faculty Senate Minutes: 12/03/1992). Combined with the typical convention of using the best faculty members to teach honors classes, it leads to an interesting subject of future discussion around the impact of honors programs on faculty dynamics when the best teachers, who are likely also the higher funded faculty members, are receiving accessory benefits to participating in the honors program.

Conclusion

In total, this leads back to what appears to be the heart of the issue: are the people who are receiving the benefits of an honors education truly the ones who need them? As suggested by Bowen and Bok and Dr. Spurrier, there is justification for offering more intensive coursework and special incentive when students are brought into the university are of a different caliber than the standard incoming class. But the types of students brought to the university – as evidenced by the demographic, admissions and scholarship data – indicate that the function of the honors college is to support the education of a particular type of student and prevent the rest from succeeding in a similar manner. In short, the answer seems to be no, the individuals who need these resources are not gaining access to them, particularly as most of the students and faculty receiving these

goods would have likely had access to such resources without any additional sponsorship. Based on this evidence, it is difficult to argue then that the meritocratic principles of an honors program or college, oft times inherited from the parent university, are a just method of distribution rather than a reproduction of class and elitism.

Outside research suggests that not only would these students have succeeded elsewhere without the additional assistance provided by the university, but that efficient use of basic resources – material or other wise such as money, housing, professorial interactions – would go further for promising low-income or minority students potentially over-looked by common placement measures. Future investigations may find that the honors colleges do function in this manner as both SHSU and UTSA offer transfer into the program if GPA is high enough, but based on the consistency in the demographic data for the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College, it seems unlikely that this occurs at a high enough rate to account for these students. This is particularly so if such students are encountering difficulties in transitioning from high school to college without any help as the learning communities at both SHSU and UTSA appear to develop based on the needs of the university – which would effectively be prestige and financial endowments via students, faculty and research – rather than the needs of the students. Likewise, research also suggests that by this point in their life, most students' trajectories have already been largely determined due to external factors which they had little control over themselves.

This also does not account for the accessory benefits to enrollment in the honors college such as cultural trips, special access to facilities, professors, and research opportunities, and early registration. While it may be argued that these are the students who are more likely to be interested in these opportunities, it also presupposes that there are not other students who have stumbled along their academic careers and are looking for opportunities to further themselves despite their earlier missteps. Rather, the lag between white or Asian middle-to-upper class students and minority and low-income students is maintained through this lack of access. This process also maintains the social and cultural gap by providing those students with already high capital in these areas with more opportunities to increase this capital which their non-honors peers will rarely have access to.

The argument to develop and maintain an honors college appears from afar to have merit, but as with the concept of meritocracies, and in many cases education itself, when these notions and programs are considered closely it leaves questions as to the actual function of education. Students are being taught, but which students and how well? If students are among the white or Asian middle-to-upper class, it appears to be of the best education, but for minority and low-income students the results are less promising and division seems suspiciously biased. Similarly, if it is truly the university's intent to churn out high-achieving scholars, whether it is for prestige or not, shouldn't that be the goal of the university as a whole instead of banking on a select group of students to bear this academic burden? UTSA certainly seems to be suggesting that with their current admissions requirements, but if so, then what need is there to maintain an

honors college when the whole student population is of such a high quality? The logical conclusion is that there isn't any.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The similarities between the literature on honors colleges and meritocratic distribution in universities suggest a correlation between the function and stratification inherent to both academic institutions. As such, research into both university and honors college environments becomes necessary to develop a framework for understanding the deeper social issues found in honors colleges. Since honors colleges are developed by the university and must align themselves to the mission of the university, a potential connection between the two environments would indicate the impact of a larger university climate on the values and practices of an honors college. In addition, research into institutes of higher education has been attentive to the recent increase in honors colleges, but has yet to identify the specific elements which generate an honors college. The importance of determining these elements is their implication on the social organization and ideology of the honors college, specifically in regards to issues of stratification related to distributive justice and meritocracies.

During the 1980s, higher education nationwide was facing a comeback from a wobbly financial future where spending was exceeding annual operating budgets due to “the pervasive appeal of expansion across all institutions” (Thelin 2011: “A Proliferation of Problems” 5th paragraph). In the midst of this, universities were beginning to be scrutinized as the public and state and federal governments were questioning the access, affordability, and instruction provided by these institutions of higher education. New policies forced universities to be accountable for their actions and show their public

funding was being put to good use. Meritocratic principles and honors programs within this environment allowed independent universities to vie for the brighter students, showing not only the general attraction of the university, but also its practical ability to compete, enroll, instruct and graduate employable students (Thelin 2011).

At Sam Houston State University and the University of Texas – San Antonio, honors programs and colleges were not developed purely for academia's sake, to create an environment beneficial to a particular subset of students. This appears to be the argument on the face of their development, heralded by those in charge of its formation, but faculty senate meetings, university reports, and interoffice memorandum indicate that there was a larger force motivating in their establishment and that is prestige. Surrounding the development of the honors programs are concerns about student enrollment and retention, faculty and academic quality, and a desire to increase research output. Failures in any of these areas reflect on the university as a whole, which can lead to a greater decline in the prestige of the university and amount of funding generated to continue developing the university. As such, attracting high-achieving students becomes a solution as they will not only raise the student profile of both universities, but are suggested as a way to draw and produce better faculty and increase the amount of research in a manner that seems similar to the use of graduate programs. An argument might be made that these universities are motivated more by the financial resources, but upon looking at the overarching focus, particularly as both university's push towards research status, financial endeavors are used to begat prestige and reach greater levels of status. By the 2000s, when both SHSU and UTSA transitioned to an honors college,

university documents become very blunt about the purpose of the program as way of enhancing the move towards research status. This, in combination with the constant questions of academic quality and student enrollment and the, again blunt, discussion that an honors college is a change in name only and not requiring any sort of investment to revamp it, means that the transition was a foregone conclusion.

It is easy then to see the connection between the universities and the honors colleges. They work in concert towards the same goal, particularly as the honors college was essentially birthed from this mission of prestige. It is very unsurprising then that the literature on honors colleges are so similar to the discussions and concerns about meritocracies. Many universities have moved to this model for distributive justice both in admissions and resource allocation, using academically meritorious criteria to admit students, SHSU and UTSA notwithstanding, and the honors college is just a smaller, more concentrated form of a meritocracy, the issues developed by such a practice much more overt for its size. While justifications for such practices could be made as these students have achieved at a higher rate than their peers, and by requiring more of them, more should be given as incentive to participate, these defenses focus on the superficial aspects of education.

At this point in their education, most of these students who have achieved greatly arrive from the upper echelons of society and are a majority white (or academically conceptualized as white, such as the Asian population), and there is little which minority and low-income students can do to overcome the deficiencies their family background has wrought as education itself acts as a gatekeeper against them. The merits of the

students themselves are created by this family background and likewise not commonly developed individually, so the supposedly universal competition of a meritocracy has actually restricted itself to a particular sect of students in society, as witnessed by the demographic data of those students admitted and funded by these honors colleges.

Similarly the incentives given to students to participate in such programs leads to concerns as it is not primarily focused on the common ills associated with college life, meaning finances and housing. Rather, participation in the honors college leads to an uncommon amount of access to research, academic, and cultural opportunities, facilities, professors, and administrative prerogatives which the rest of the student population does not have access to. This type of incentivizing suggests that the university is placing a greater importance on this set of students than those who likely need the aid more. Similarly, it perpetuates and possibly exacerbates the gap which already exists between white, middle-to-upper class students and minority and low income students without any interest in dissipating it.

Honors colleges are a new, but increasingly common development within higher education, spurred by meritocratic ideology which disperses resources based on a student's achievements rather than need. Both meritocracies and honors colleges have been harshly and justifiably criticized as being stratified due to elitism and underrepresentation of minorities and students from lower socioeconomic statuses. While suggestions have been made to alleviate issues of elitism by opening up the honors college ideal to the university as a whole, or to use the honors college as a

pedagogical laboratory whose success will be disseminated into the greater academic environment, there is little evidence at SHSU or UTSA that this will happen.

Limitations

As the initial interest in the study was on the development of honors college, particularly in the transition from honors programs and how the programs developed in the first place, it became necessary to pare the selections to a manageable task. As discussed in chapter 3, the universities selected were restricted to public universities within the state of Texas with older, established honors programs which had transitioned to honors colleges whose website descriptions matched the NCHC's basic characteristics for an honors college. This creates some obvious limitations as there are a plethora of other types of institutions of higher education – i.e community colleges, private colleges, etc. – which have differing environments, histories, and missions. Hopefully, by starting with public universities within Texas, information and theories developed from this study will provide a basis for future research incorporating and comparing public universities with private universities, community colleges, and honors colleges located in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and women's universities, as well as honors colleges across the United States and the globe. UTSA is indeed a Hispanic Serving Institution, but this was never explicitly discussed as it did not appear that there was any strong connection between this aspect of UTSA's development and the honors college. A more in depth analysis of this would be interesting to discover if universities focused on serving a particular sector

of the population has any impact on honors programs and colleges, of if they function in a purely academic manner.

The mission of the university appears to have a role in dictating the development the honors colleges is the mission of the university itself. While this was of interest to the researcher, the direction of the data gathered did not coincide with being able to do a just analysis of the subject, leaving it open for following studies interested in such things as if different goals of the university determine whether the honors program is an innovative addition to the institutional structure or simply another moving part within the larger plan. Likewise, as the main purposes of this study was to investigate the development of honors programs and colleges, many of the subjects touched upon within chapter 4 were developed as broadly as possible, but warrant a study more devoted to the particular topics. Among this would be demographics and socio-economic status of students enrolled in the honors college, the impact of honors courses on faculty, honors colleges as compared to other types of learning communities, the comparative functions of honors colleges and graduate programs, and the impact of incentivizing honors colleges (some of which is considered in Brenda Freeman's 2012 thesis, "The Stigmatization of Honors College Students").

Broader Impacts

By focusing research on the ideologies of distributive justice and meritocracies, a bridge between reports on honors colleges and the literature about general academia has been created. Seeking to understand the university environment encapsulating the honors

college allows not only insight into the influences of a university impact of the development of an honors college, but provides a greater comprehension of how distributive justice and meritocracies on a grand scale impacts local level institutions. This data will aid educators and policy-makers by indicating the concussive outcomes of education policies based on present theories of justice through merit. It will further allow universities and other institutes of higher education a better understanding of the social environment created by university policies and ideologies.

REFERENCES

- “Academic Highlights.” 2014. Retrieved December 12, 2014
<http://www.utsa.edu/about/glance/academic-highlights.html>.
- Alexander, Karl L, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson. 2007. “Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap.” *American Sociological Review* 72(April): 167-180.
- Alexander, Karl L., Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson. 2014. *The Long Shadow: Family Background, Disadvantaged Urban Youth, and the Transition to Adulthood*. Russell Sage Foundation. September 15, 1990, 1, 3.
- An Introduction to UTSA*. 1985. UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Box 20, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Anderson, Nancy. 1990. “SHSU Program Offer Courses for Motivated Students.” *The Huntsville Item*, September 15, pp. 1 & 3. Sam Houston State University Archives. Honors Program.
- Arenson, Karen W. 2005. “Winning Back the Brightest: Honors College Helps CUNY Lure Students Who Shunned It.” *New York Times*. May 26, 2005, B1, B5.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Hamilton, Laura T. 2013. *Paying for the Party*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Austin College. “History.” Date of Access 11/3/14.
<http://www.austincollege.edu/about/history/>
- Bernal, Joe J. 1999. “The Political Context of UTSA’s Founding Shaping the Future,” in *Access, Equity, and Anima: The Legacy of Our Community’s Struggle for Knowledge* edited by Louis Mendoza and Rodolfo Rosales. UTSA University Archives Vertical File, UA 1.03, Box 3, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Blau, Peter M. and Otis D. Duncan. 1967. “The Process of Stratification.” in *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- “Blueprint for excellence: and addendum to the UTSA action plan, undated,” UTSA Office of Institutional Effectiveness Records, UA 4.05, Box 5, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241-258 in *The Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J. Richardson. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Translated by Laretta C. Clough. Polity Press.
- Bowen, William G. and Derek Bok. 1998. *Shape of the River*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. "Beyond the Educational Frontier: The Great American Dream Freeze." Pp. 112-121 in *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, edited by R. Arum and I. R. Beattie. Mountainview, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 2002. "Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited." *Sociology of Education* 75(January): 1-18.
- Brochure, 1993-1994 Highlights. 1993. UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Box 20, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Buchmann, Claudia and Thomas A. DiPrete. 2006. "The Growing Female Advantage in College Completion: The Role of Family Background and Academic Achievement." *American Sociological Review* 71(4): 515-541.
- Carter, Prudence L. 2006. "Straddling Boundaries: Identity, Culture, and School." *Sociology of Education* 79(4): 304-328.
- Cashion, Ty. 2004. *Sam Houston State University - An Institutional Memory: 1879-2004*. Huntsville, TX: Texas Review Press.
- City University of New York. 2013. "History." City University of New York. Retrieved May 1st, 2013 (<http://www.cuny.edu/about/history.html>).
- Cohen, Joseph. 1970. "Honors Programs." *Journal of Higher Education*, 41(3): 236-238.
- Coleman, James, Ernest Campbell, Carol Hobson, James McPartland, Alexander Mood, Frederic Weinfeld, and Robert York. 1966. "The Coleman Report." In *Equality of Education Opportunity*. Washington D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office: 1, 3, 8-9, 11-12, 14, 32.
- Collins, Randall. 1971. "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 36(6): 1002-1019.

- Correspondence, 2000. University of Texas at San Antonio. University Restructuring Committee Records, UA 04.06.01, Box 1, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Dumais, Susan A. (2002). "Cultural Capital, Gender, and School Success: the Role of Habitus." *Sociology of Education*, 75(January): 44-68.
- Ehrenberg, Ronald G., Liang Zhang, and Jared M. Levin. 2006. "Crafting a Class: The Trade-Off Between Merit Scholarships and Enrolling Lower-Income Students." *The Review of Higher Education* 29(2): 195-211.
- Elster, John. 1992. *Local Justice: How Institutions Allocate Scarce Goods and Necessary Burdens*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.
- Floyd, Deborah L. and Alexandria Holloway. 2006. "Prioritizing Service to the Academically Talented: The Honors College." *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (136): 43-52.
- Freeman, Brenda. 2012. "The Stigmatization of Honors College Students." Undergraduate thesis, Honors College, Texas A&M University – Commerce, Commerce, Texas.
- Geiser, James D. 2012. "Financial Aid Through a Bourdieu-ian Lens: Inequality Perpetuated or an Opportunity for Change?" *Journal of College Admissions* 216:8-14.
- Goldsmith, Pat António. 2004. "Schools' Racial Mix, Students' Optimism, and the Black-White and Latino-White Achievement Gaps." *Sociology of Education* 77(April): 121-147.
- Griffith, Amanda L. 2011. "Keeping Up with the Joneses: Institutional Changes Following the Adoption of Merit Aid Policy," *Economics of Education* 30: 1022-1033.
- Haller, Archibald O. and Alejandro Portes. 1973. "Status Attainment Processes." *Sociology of Education* 46(1): 51-91.
- Hamilton, Kendra. 2004. "Courting the Best and the Brightest." *Black Issues in Higher Education* 21(1): 29-31.
- Jencks, Christopher and Meredith Phillips. 1998. "The Black-White Test Score Gap: An Introduction" in *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

- Jenkins, Richard. 1992. *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge.
- Karabel, Jerome and Alexander W. Astin. 1975. "Social Class, Academic Ability, and College 'Quality.'" *Social Forces* 53(3): 381-398.
- Killgore, Leslie. 2009. "Merit and Competition in Selective College Admissions." *The Review of Higher Education* 32(4): 469-488.
- Lareau, Annette. 1987. "Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital." *Sociology of Education*, 60(2): 73-85.
- Lareau, Annette and Erin McNamara Horvat. 1999. "Moments of Social Inclusion and Exclusion Race, Class, and Cultural Capital in Family-School Relationships." *Sociology of Education*, 72(1): 37-53.
- Liu, Amy. 2011. "Unraveling the Myth of Meritocracy within the Context of US Higher Education." *Higher Education* 62(4): 692-712.
- Longanecker, David. 2002. "Is Merit-Based Student Aid Really Trumping Need-Based Aid?" *Change* 34(2): 30-37.
- Magness, Robbie. 1995. "Decade-old Program Enhances University's Credibility, Reputation." Sam Houston University Archives. Honors Program. Newspaper Article, 09/05/95.
- "Meeting Minutes" UTSA Faculty Senate Records, UA 03.02, Box 1, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- National Collegiate Honors Council. 2013. <http://nchchonors.org>.
- Oakes, Jeannie and Gretchen Guiton. 1995. "Matchmaking: The Dynamics of High School Tracking Decisions." *American Educational Research Journal* 32(1): 3-33.
- Oakes, Jeannie, Amy Stuart Welles, Makeba Jones, and Amanda Datnow. 1997. "Detracking: The Social Construction of Ability, Cultural Politics, and Resistance to Reform." *Teachers College Record* 98(3).
- Ogbu, John U. 2004. "Collective Identity and the Burden of 'Acting White' in Black History, Community, and Education." *The Urban Review* 36(1): 1-35.
- Outcalt, Charles. 1999. "The Importance of Community College Honors Programs." *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (108): 59-68.

- Pehlke, Judith. 2003. "The Myth of an Honors Education." *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 4(2): 27-33.
- Pressler, Charlotte. 2009. "The Two-Year College Honors Program and the Forbidden Topics of Class and Cultural Capital." *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council Quarterly*, 1982-1984. 1984. "Campus Notes" in *Quarterly* 3(2). UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Boxes 1, Folder 6, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Reardon, Sean F. 2014. "Education." *Pathways*: 51-56.
- Rinn, Anne N. and Craig T. Cobane. 2009. "Elitism Misunderstood: In Defense of Equal Opportunity." *The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 10(1): 53-56.
- The Roadrunner*, UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Box 2, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Sam Houston State University. 2013. "Elliott T. Bowers Honors College Student Handbook 2013/2014." <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/6ca4417c-8fbf-4713-b29f-29b9b9c3fbda.pdf>
- Sam Houston State University. "SHSU: A Brief History." Date of Access 10/23/14. http://www.shsu.edu/~pin_www/history.html
- Sam Houston State University. Department of Criminal Justice. "History." Date of Access 11/10/14. <http://www.shsu.edu/academics/criminal-justice/about/history.html>
- Sam Houston State University Archives. Academic Policy Council Minutes, 1989-1990.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. Faculty Senate Minutes, 1984-2014.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. May 7, 1990. Faculty Senate Minutes. Memo, Faculty Senate Committee on Committees, "The 1990 Faculty Survey."
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1990. Honors Program. Correspondence, Gary Bell to Martin J. Anisman, 03/15/1990.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1989. Honors Program. Correspondence, "Honors Housing," Frank Cloud to E. Rex Isham, 12/8/1989.

- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1992. Honors Program. Correspondence, "Onners Smartfest, Service Requirements," Desirée A. Overree to Honors Program Participants, 10/12/1992.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1992. Honors Program. Honors Student Handbook.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1995. Honors Program. Institutional Effectiveness Plan, 1990-1995.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1990. Honors Program. Preliminary Student Handbook, "SHSU Honors Program."
- Sam Houston State University Archives. 1991. Presidents Report, Fall 1992.
- Sam Houston State University Archives. Undergraduate Catalog, 1990-2014.
- Sam Houston State University, Office of Institutional Effectiveness. 2014. "Honors Tracking Study." Obtained June 16, 2014.
- Scott, Richard I. and Philip L. Frana. 2008. "Honors 2025: The Future of the Honors College." *Honors in Practice* 4: 29-33.
- Sederberg, Peter. 2005. "Characteristics of the Contemporary Honors College * A Descriptive Analysis of a Survey of NCHC Member Colleges." *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, 6(2): 121-136
- Singell, Larry D. and Hui-Hsuan Tang. 2012. "The Pursuit of Excellence: An Analysis of the Honors College Application and Enrollment Decision for a Large Public University." *Research in Higher Education* 53(7): 717-737.
- Spurrier, Robert. 2009. "To the Charge of 'Honors as Elitist,' on Advice of Council We Plead 'Guilty as Charged.'" *The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 10(1): 49-51.
- Strong, Paul. 2006. "Honors as Skunkworks." *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 7(1): 53-55
- "Student Needs Survey," 1992, UTSA Office of Institutional Effectiveness Records, UA 4.05, Box 5, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Telles, Edward and Vilma Ortiz. 2013. "Intergenerational Assimilation Patterns of Mexican American Students." in *Regarding Educación*, edited by Bryant Jensen and Adam Sawyer. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Texas Legislature. Senate. S.B. 282. 76th Session, 1999. Retrieved December 12, 2014 <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/History.aspx?LegSess=76R&Bill=SB282>.
- Texas Legislature. House of Representatives. H.B. 1266. 76th Session, 1999. Retrieved December 12, 2014 (<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/History.aspx?LegSess=76R&Bill=HB1266>)
- “Tier One UTSA”. Retrieved December 12, 2014 <http://www.utsa.edu/tierone/>.
- Title V Assessment Plan. 2000. University of Texas at San Antonio. University Restructuring Committee Records, UA 04.06.01, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Thelin, John R. 2011. “Coming of Age in America: Higher Education as a Troubled Giant, 1970-2000.” *A History of American Higher Education* [Kindle for iPad, version 4.7.1]. Retrieved from Amazon.com.
- Treat, Tod and Thomas C. Barnard. 2012. “Seeking Legitimacy: The Community College Mission and the Honors College.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 36: 695-712.
- Turner, Ralph. H. 1960. Sponsored and contest mobility and the school system. *American Sociological Review* 25(6): 855-67.
- Undergraduate Course Catalogs, UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Boxes 17 & 22, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- “UTSA Profile, circa 1988”, UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Box 20, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Wagener, James W. 1985. “From the President,” in *Sombrilla* 2(3). UTSA University Publications Collection, UA 1.02, Box 7, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections.
- Weiner, Norm. 2009. “Honors is Elitist, and What’s Wrong with That?” *The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 10(1): 19-24.